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HEAVENLY LIGHT

FOR

EARTHLY FIRESIDES.

"Dayspring of Eternity!

Dawn on us this morning-tide,
Light from light's exhaustless sea,
Now no more thy radiance hide,
But dispel with glorious might,
All our night."

VON ROSENROTH.

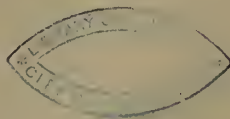
"The entrance of thy words giveth light."

PSALM cxix. 130.

BY

REV. W. W. HARSHA,

PASTOR SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHICAGO.



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PREFACE.

THE object had in view in the preparation of the following treatise is indicated in the title: **HEAVENLY LIGHT FOR EARTHLY FIRESIDES.** The attempt is here made to prepare a work on the great themes of our holy religion, which, while sufficiently full and comprehensive, will not be so elaborate as to weary in its perusal those for whom it is chiefly intended. The aim of the author has been to write for the *common* mind; to prepare a work upon the great leading doctrines of Christianity for the unlearned—for those who constitute the far larger proportion of the inhabitants of every land. He has not intended this as a text-book for the learned and critical. These have at hand the larger and more exhaustive works on theology—works which seldom find their way to the firesides, where it is hoped these pages will be welcome.

While, however, it is true that we have written chiefly for the unlearned, we would not intimate that there is no food in these pages for cultivated minds. It is impossible, perhaps, to write upon the great themes of our holy religion for the mature intellect, without the presentation of much upon which even the learned may, with profit, dwell. Theological students, too, it is believed, may obtain help from this work in determining how to discuss, before mixed congregations, the subjects which must forever form the staple of their discourses; for though profound metaphysical argument may be comprehended in the class-room and by select audiences, the young minister soon learns that, before a popular assembly, his

usefulness lies in *simplifying*, as far as possible, the truths he would convey.

The necessity for such a work as this has long been felt, not only by the writer, but by many of the most judicious pastors and divines whom he has had the privilege to consult. The united judgment has been, that a work compact and clear in its statements, logical and scriptural, imbued with the spirit of true devotion, not too diffuse and yet not too concise, not too learned and yet not wanting in research, not strictly critical and yet recognizing the conclusions of a reverent criticism, was a desideratum — a necessity — and would not only find readers at the fireside, but would prove a valuable assistant to teachers in the Sabbath School, and be a welcome companion to students in the Bible Class.

So far as possible, and for obvious reasons, all mere technical terms, and learned and classical phrases and quotations, have been omitted from the following pages. The effort has been to present these great truths in the plainest language possible, illustrating them, so far as it could be done, by comparisons drawn from every-day life, and from well known facts written upon the face of the material universe. The aim has likewise been to avoid all fanciful speculations, and the discussion of mere theories, however plausible or probable. It has also been the aim to say as little as possible of exploded heresies, and to notice existing errors in theology only when fidelity to truth would have rendered silence inexcusable.

Some will be disappointed in not seeing in these pages their familiar and cherished arguments and proofs, and others may, perhaps, be surprised to find so little that is new. The first should be reminded that much has been omitted for the sake of brevity; *prolixity* being especially objectionable in those who write for the common mind; and the second are asked to remember that, in a field so often trodden, it is hardly to be expected that we should find a spot which bears not the footprint of some one who has gone before.

As to the authorities consulted, we confess to the free use of all the works on theology within our reach, following none servilely; and, when quoting from any, giving, in the proper place, due credit. The aim has been to subject the opinions of all, as well as to subordinate our own, to the one only infallible authority—the will of the Holy Ghost, as unfolded in the Scriptures of Divine Truth. We acknowledge no ambition prompting to the utterance of any sentiment simply because we conceived it to be new. We have desired to know and express only the mind of the Master. May he approve of this humble effort to glorify his name.

We can not avoid the expression of a sincere regret that the pressure of the many cares under which these pages have been written, has seriously interfered with their literary finish. It is hoped, however, that no reader will deny himself the pleasure of studying the glorious themes here discussed because of any untidiness in the *dress* in which they appear. *Beauty* is not to be ignored, though occasionally detected in a *hasty toilet*.

CHICAGO, *January*, 1868.

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CHAPTER I.

"Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King." MILTON.

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is."—HEB. xi. 6.

THE first verse of the Bible assumes the existence of a God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In general, therefore, we may follow, with safety, this example of the Scripture, and assume, in all theological discussions, the existence of a Supreme Being — and yet we are not deprived of the privilege of going back of all assumptions and arraying before our minds the proofs of the existence of the Divine Being. Though absolute atheism is not a widely prevalent sin among men; though few are bold enough to assert, and attempt to establish, the non-existence of a Supreme Ruler — King — Creator — still it is well, at times, for our own satisfaction, to review the grounds of our belief, and to strengthen the confidence of others, in this great fundamental truth of our holy religion. To this end the first few chapters of this work will be devoted.

Attention is, however, here called to two or three preliminary considerations, as necessary to a proper understanding of the subsequent discussion:—

1. No one need expect to find the proofs upon which we depend, in demonstrating the existence of God, of the kind known as *physical* or *mathematical*. *Physical proof* is that by which we reach conclusions touching physical facts. Is it a fact that iron is hard? that ice is cold? that fire will burn? that water is a fluid? that marble is a solid? To answer all such questions we have certain physical avenues open to us. We prove that iron is hard by the touch. We come into physical contact with it; and so of all this class of questions.

2. *Mathematical proof* is that by which we determine certain questions susceptible of mathematical demonstration. Thus the question, “If five is one-fourth of twenty, what part is it of forty?” can only be answered by a mathematical formula. This, and all like questions, can be answered by the aid of figures, and, when we have reached our conclusion, we say that we have proved the matter mathematically.

3. The proof, however, by which we arrive at a conclusion touching the existence of God is neither *physical* nor *mathematical*, but *moral*. The question, “Is there a God?” not pertaining either to physics or mathematics, can not be determined by physical or mathematical proof. It is a moral problem, and can only rest upon moral evidence. Thus, in demonstrating the great fact of the Divine existence, we take into consideration certain undeniable appear-

ances, results, and phenomena in the universe of God — the domain of mind and matter — and reasoning from these, we reach a conclusion which we call a *moral certainty*. We have never *seen* God — we have never touched him. We have not come, at any time, into contact with him by any physical sense; nor have we proved, nor can we prove, his existence by any mathematical formula. And yet we have demonstrated, to our own satisfaction and the satisfaction of others, by a distinct kind of proof, that God does indeed exist.

4. This third kind of evidence — *the moral* — has been very greatly undervalued by the superficial and unthinking. These have demanded, in their sensuousness, physical or mathematical proof of the being of a God. They have claimed that they could not be satisfied with moral evidence where a matter of such transcendent interest was involved.

The unreasonableness of this demand, under the circumstances, will appear to every intelligent mind, for it is a well-known and universally-conceded fact, that the whole world admits, just as readily and just as fully and cheerfully, conclusions resting upon moral evidence only, as they do those which are supported by physical or mathematical proof. Thus, no sane person has any more doubts of the existence of his own mind, and that with that mind he reasons, remembers, wills, imagines, fears, loves and hates, than that iron is hard, that ice is cold, that fire burns, that gold is yellow, or that five is one-fourth of twenty and one-eighth of forty, or that the three

angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Every man reaches this satisfactory conclusion touching his own mind, not because he has ever seen it, or handled it, or measured it, or weighed it. He has the *moral* evidence of its existence, and he asks no other, or better. If you were to attempt to convince a man that he had no mind, because he could not demonstrate its existence by physical or mathematical proof, he would, most likely, pronounce you insane.

Thus, likewise, no human being has ever traveled out into space, to demonstrate, by actual exploration and measurement, that it is limitless; that it has no end; that it is infinite—and yet what intelligent person doubts this fact? Who is so insane as to declare, “I will not believe in the infinitude of space until I have the matter placed beyond dispute by physical or mathematical proofs?” The truth is, we have arrived at this conclusion through moral evidence; and no other kind—no amount of other proof—could make the fact more certain to our minds. The same is true of the doctrine of the soul’s immortality, and of the existence of a future state. These lie in the mind as *moral certainties*. We fully believe them, and unhesitatingly accept them, not because we have physical or mathematical proof that they are true; but because we have been brought to a conclusion by another kind of evidence, just as satisfactory to the mind.

These remarks are deemed necessary, inasmuch as some—especially the young—are liable to be misled by the insane demand for a species of evidence

touching moral problems, which, in the very nature of the case, can not be had; and which, even if it could be furnished, would be of no special value in the premises. As to all these great moral problems, the moral evidence is all-sufficient.

And now, without detaining our readers further with these preliminary questions, we proceed to lay before them the proofs of the Divine existence, so far as we deem it needful in this work.

And here let it be observed, that these proofs may be presented under *three* general heads:

I. Those that are metaphysical.

II. Those that are phenomenal.

III. Those that are Scriptural.

The metaphysical argument for the being of a God may be briefly stated thus:

We take, as a starting point, certain principles necessarily involved in the laws of the human mind — of human intelligence — and we say, from the existence of these principles, we are driven to the conclusion that there is a first cause, to be known and recognized as God. For instance, we find in the soul of man, and as a part of itself, ideas of *infinity*, *eternity* and *immensity*, and as the soul itself is not endowed with these attributes — as it is neither *infinite*, *eternal* nor *limitless* — it is argued that the conception or idea of these perfections points to a being who does possess them — and this being is God. The argument here is simply this: a stream never rises higher than its source, and will rise as high as its fountain; but the soul, in the conception

of these ideas, rises confessedly above itself, and has glimpses of its fountain — God, the author of its being.

Another metaphysical statement which argues the being of a God, may be made thus :

We see existences all around us, which the mind at once pronounces *effects*. Thus the world, with all its material contents, animate and inanimate; the planets which roll in space; and even the soul of man, with all its wondrous powers, are, without hesitation, declared to be the production of a power above themselves. The spontaneous, the unforced, judgment of mankind is, that all these things are *effects*. They were produced by some one. But a cause and an effect can not be the same. An effect, in other words, can not be its own cause. The thing produced can not be its own producer. Therefore, all these things, of which we have any knowledge as effects — all, indeed, by which we are surrounded — must have had a cause outside of themselves, and this cause must be the self-existent and uncreated God. From this conclusion there is no escape. It is founded upon what the minds of all the dispassionate and unbiassed will regard as a necessary law of human consciousness.

As, however, this metaphysical argument is somewhat abstruse, and as the primary design of this discussion is to present these great truths in a form as popular as possible, we will not dwell at greater length upon this point, but will pass to consider

II. *The phenomenal argument in favor of the Divine existence.* This, as its name purports, is the

argument drawn from the various phenomena in the universe, of which we can, as intelligent beings, take cognizance.

1. *There are the phenomena of nature.* Under this head we include the movements of the heavenly bodies; the order and harmony which characterize their every change; the revolution of the earth, and distant planets, on their own axes; and also their revolution around their central suns; and all the glorious displays of adaptation and fitness which distinguish the being of every material thing throughout the universe of God, so far as known to us.

Now, throughout the whole physical and material domain, *we can but be impressed with the manifestations of law every where found* — of law to which every material existence is, by its very being, subjected, whether it be the mote that floats in the sunbeam, or the mysterious comet which careers, with all but incredible velocity, through space. Every where we discover the presence of law — fixed, settled, determined — as one of the grand, invariable phenomena which mark the material universe. It is, as is well known, by the universal law of gravitation that the universe is bound together, and by this law all the motions of the heavenly bodies are regulated. It is in strict accordance with fixed and certain laws that all growth is produced, whether of plants or animals. It is by fixed and certain laws that all the elements of nature are compounded, and their usefulness determined. Water, for every eight parts of oxygen has one part of hydrogen. This is the exact and

invariable proportion of its constituent elements, the world over, and throughout the ages. Disregard this law and water disappears. Seven parts of oxygen to two of hydrogen — or six of one and three of the other — or any other proportions or combinations would utterly fail to give you this necessary agent.

So, likewise, the air we breathe is composed of a certain fixed number of parts of oxygen, and a certain fixed number of parts of nitrogen; vary this combination one iota — change it by a measure ever so minute — and you have not air, but a mixture which will be deadly in its nature — one which can not long be breathed either by man or beast. So, too, it is in strict accordance with fixed laws that all *changes* take place, both in the inward constitution, and the outward form and appearance of things. If a block of wood is burned to ashes in the open air, or changed to charcoal by smothered combustion in the heaped pit, or allowed slowly to rot beneath the action of summer's suns and rains, and winter's frosts and snows, it is through the operation of law that these various changes are effected. It is by law that the winds blow, that the tides ebb and flow, that rains descend, that vapors exhale, that rivers roll, that the earth brings forth her teeming products, and that animal and vegetable existences are perpetuated. By law life begins, is sustained, and ended. By law intellectual power is developed, mind controlled, thought governed, and all mental processes effected. It is in accordance with law — *fixed, certain, definite*

—that we behold all effects produced around us, whether in the domain of the physical or spiritual. This even infidels and atheists are willing to admit.

And now the question arises, *Can there be law without a law-giver?* Can it be that all things, animate and inanimate, physical and spiritual, vegetable, animal and mineral, exist only in accordance with clearly established rules of order, and laws of being, and yet all this order be without a great controlling mind to establish it, and all this law be without an author? Who can believe this? Reason cries with a voice which will not be hushed, “All this law proclaims, with trumpet tongue, a high and glorious source from whence it proceeds.” Every faculty of man’s soul, if not crushed into silence by the millstone of atheistic stupidity, utters continually, “There must be a God, since there is law every where. All the phenomena of nature being controlled by it, and all her operations being governed by it, there must be a God above all — before all — higher, mightier, more glorious than all — to whom all this law and order distinctly point, and of whom they most emphatically speak.” Yes,

“God hath a presence, and that ye may see
In the folds of the flower, the leaf of the tree,
In the sun of the noon-day, the star of the night,
In the storm cloud of darkness, the rainbow of light,
In the waves of the ocean, the furrows of land,
In the mountain of granite, the atom of sand:
Turn where you may, from the sky to the sod,
And where *law is*, you have a clear record of God.”

The argument, then, for the Divine existence, as drawn from the phenomena of universal law in nature, must now be clearly before the mind of the reader. If any further illustration of this truth were needed, the following might suffice :

Suppose you were shipwrecked, and cast upon a distant island, among a people whose language you did not understand, and of whose manners and customs you were wholly ignorant. But suppose, that upon observation, you were to discover that every thing among this strange people was conducted in the most orderly manner ; that the rights of all were respected ; that strong restraints upon the commission of crime were every where apparent ; that whenever offences occurred, the guilty were promptly arrested and punished ; and that every where the presence of *law* was visible ; law — not *dormant*, but active and vigorous — performing its functions and filling its allotted sphere of duty — what would be your conclusion ? Would it not be that there must be a king, president, governor, or chief, some ruling mind, or some governmental authority or power, to which, or to whom, all this was to be referred ? Would you ever dream that all this beautiful order was the result of mere chance — of a “ fortuitous concurrence of circumstances ? ” Surely, no ! The facts before you would warrant you in coming to but one conclusion — your reason would allow you to come to no other. You might not yet have *seen* this king or governor — you might not have *heard* that there was such a being in existence — and yet his existence would be demon-

strated to you, with infallible certainty, by the law and order, which must have had their origin in him. So with our God. The prevalence of universal law and order proclaims, with a voice which can not be mistaken, that he exists, though eye of man hath never rested upon him.

2. We can not, however, close this chapter without a brief consideration of an argument upon which much stress has been laid, and which may not be without interest to the general reader. It falls properly under this division of our subject, and has been called the argument for the Divine existence drawn *from the marks of design in the universe.*

We can not fail to see that every thing upon which our eye falls, exhibits marks of being designed for some useful end or purpose. Thus *water* is evidently designed to act as the great cleansing element in nature, and also to quench the thirst of man and beast. The atmosphere is clearly intended to promote respiration, and also to act as the medium of conveying sounds from ear to ear. The eye was manifestly planned for sight; the ear for hearing; the lips and tongue for articulation; the palate for tasting; the stomach for digesting the food, and the heart for propelling the blood. So the hands, the feet, the brain, the liver—every organ of the physical frame—bears the undeniable marks of being designed for a purpose. They do, each, subserve an end, and that end was evidently not designated by mere chance, but was manifestly the result of an intelligent plan. And not only is this true of man's physical frame,

in all its organs and parts, but is also true of every object in the universe, of which we have any knowledge. In the vegetable kingdom, some plants and shrubs and flowers have medicinal properties. The wood of some trees is good for fuel, and of some for dyeing, and of others for building. In the mineral kingdom we find metals of various kinds, as iron, copper, silver, platinum and gold, each having, in the economy of nature, a distinct purpose and end to fill. The same is true of all the existences in the animal kingdom. The horse, the ox, the cow, the dog, the cat, the fowls in our yards, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, all are seen to have a place to fill, an end to subserve, in the economy of nature. Each exists through a manifest purpose — a foregoing design or plan. It would be evidently absurd to say that it was merely by *chance* or *accident* that the horse was useful; that fowl and fish were good for food; that coal and wood, when subjected to the action of fire, would warm our bodies, and cook our victuals, and propel our machinery; and that iron and brass were adapted to the manufacture of implements of utility for agriculture and the mechanic arts. The mind of man instinctively rejects the proposition to refer this adaptation of means to ends to chance or accident, and demands a better reason for what is seen to be a universal law in nature.

Now, the argument, from all that is observed touching design in the universe, is this: *Wherever there is a design, there must be a designer — a plan*

presupposes one who plans — a purpose bespeaks one who purposes. The adaptation of any object to a specified end, implies, necessarily one who adapted it to that end. The mind, as by instinct, thus reasons. We can not avoid this conclusion, except by doing violence to our better judgment and the mind's intuitive perceptions. You see, for instance, a machine whose end or use you discover to be the cutting of the grain upon our fields. This end is admirably subserved by it. This is manifestly the specific purpose for which it was made. Now what is the conclusion? that it was made by something we call accident? that it was the product of blind chance? O, no. We say, at once, "An intelligent mind devised it; planned it; adapted it to this very end. It had a maker who could exercise forethought, who had skill and wisdom, and who could adapt means to ends."

The whole universe, then, being filled with the marks of wise design — of the skillful adaptation of certain objects to specified ends — we conclude that some great, controlling mind has ordered it all — devised it all — planned it all — and that that mind is God's.

We would not bring this chapter to a close without presenting for the consideration of the reader a few practical thoughts. And

1st. It requires no protracted consideration to convince the unprejudiced that we have entered upon the study of a subject, than which none can be more solemn or more important. To know God, the author

of our being, the fountain of all our blessings, the source of all our mercies, the glorious self-existent originator of life, the gracious upholder of all that he has created, must certainly be the very highest attainment to which a creature can aspire. How can one lay claim to intelligence who is ignorant of that Being to whom he owes his very existence? How can one hope to serve and worship God with acceptance who has either no conception, or but an imperfect one, of his character? How can we “glorify God in our bodies and our spirits,”—which is manifestly our “reasonable service”—if we know him not? And how can we hope to share hereafter in the glory and blessedness found alone in his presence, if we are ignorant, while here, of his perfections? But

2d. It must be manifest to all, that in the study of themes confessedly so high, so far above us, we shall need the constant aid and guidance of God himself. As God only knows his own nature, so he only can reveal it to others. In his light only shall we see clearly. Let, then, the prayer of every reader be, “Lord open thou my mind to receive the truth; enlarge my understanding; strengthen my imagination; exalt my groveling perceptions; infuse new vigor into my reasoning powers, that I may attain to a better knowledge of thy glorious character. Be thou my teacher, that I may know thee, whom to know aright is life eternal.”

CHAPTER II.

“Infinite God; thou great, unrivaled one!
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun!
Compared with thine how dim his beauty seems!
How quenched the radiance of his golden beams!”

COWPER.

“The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.”—Ps. xlv. 6.

It was remarked in the last chapter, that in entering upon a consideration of the proofs of God's existence we were not to look for *physical* or *mathematical* evidence of this great truth; for, this being neither a physical nor a mathematical fact, could not be demonstrated by either of those kinds of evidence. Being a moral problem, it must be proved by a resort to what is termed *moral evidence*. That is, we are to take into consideration certain facts, appearances and phenomena within us and around us, and reasoning from these, we reach a conclusion which we call a *moral certainty*. We further attempted to show that the mind *should* be as fully satisfied with the conclusions at which it arrives in this way, as with those reached in any other.

Having disposed of these preliminary considera-

tions, it was then stated that there are three lines of argument, in pursuing which we will arrive at the clear and undoubted evidence of God's existence :

1st. The Metaphysical. 2nd. The Phenomenal. And 3rd. The Scriptural.

Upon the first class of proofs we did not dwell, as the metaphysical argument, though highly conclusive to a certain class of minds, is regarded as somewhat abstruse, and not so satisfactory to the general reader.

Upon the argument from phenomena we entered only so far as to notice the *phenomena of nature*, by which is developed every where in the universe of God, *the presence of law*. Upon this fact we dwelt as a *fact admitted* by atheists themselves ; the argument, clear and irresistible, being this : *where there is law, there must be a lawgiver ; and universal law points to an infinitely glorious Lawgiver — even to God.*

But we are not yet done with this argument from phenomena ; and we now invite the attention of our readers to another phase of this intensely interesting discussion.

Besides the phenomena of the *natural* world, to which reference has now been made, indicating the existence of a lawgiver, we have another class of facts which clearly prove, as we think, the presence in the universe of a *Moral Governor*. By a Moral Governor we mean *one who administers government or rule with regard to moral principles ; who has respect for the right ; who rewards those who do right, and punishes those who do wrong.*

In the first chapter, we searched simply for the proofs in creation of a Supreme Being ; and those proofs we found in the law and order every where exhibited. Now we inquire for those phenomena which prove that there is a ruler who has regard to *good and evil, right and wrong* ; in other words, the phenomena of a *moral government*.

Let us now institute a search for these phenomena ; and we appeal,

1. *To the soul of man, or to individual consciousness* ; and,

2. *To the history of the world, or to universal experience.*

And 1st. If we look down into the soul of man, we will discover two things to aid us in our investigation :

I. *A moral sense, or a faculty of distinguishing between actions, and discerning whether they are right or wrong, morally good or morally evil.*

Now we wish you to pause just here for a moment while we inquire, *Whence this distinction, in the mind, of actions into these two classes?* How does it come that *every* mind recognizes this difference ? Why have *all* men—in every age of the world, and in all nations—had this discernment touching what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust, what is righteous and what is wicked ? The answer to this question can only be found in the fact that there is a Supreme Being, who is also a Moral Governor, and who, as the maker and governor of man, has planted in his soul this distinction. Actions

as *good* or *evil* have reference to a Supreme Being. This power of discernment points to a Moral Governor, with whom this distinction between actions originated.

What is a right action? The only answer is: *an action conformed to the will of the universal source of all authority*. What is a wrong or sinful action? Certainly *an action not conformed to the will of this Being?*

The existence, then, of this ability to thus discern between actions, clearly points to a Moral Governor, whose perfect will is the only standard of right and wrong. But then,

2nd. In looking into our souls, we find that when we do *right* we experience pleasure, and when we do *wrong* we experience pain. Something within us *approves* of what we do *in the one case*, and as clearly *disapproves* in the other. How is this? Here are clearly rewards and punishments, and of a *moral* character, or for *moral* actions. When one casts himself from a precipice, and finds himself at the base all bruised and mangled and bleeding, he has suffered from the violation of a *physical* law, and the existence of that *law* proves, as we have seen, the existence of a lawgiver; and when one violates a *moral* law, or a rule of *moral* conduct, and experiences the punishment, it as clearly proves that there is a *Moral* Governor whose *moral* enactments have been broken. If one thrusts his hand into the fire and suffers from it, it is because he has violated a *physical* law, and the presence of that law, in whose

violation he is punished, says to his reason, "There is a lawgiver, whose physical statute you have in this instance broken." So when he performs an action morally wrong, the pain he experiences tells of a moral law broken, which proclaims a Moral Governor offended.

To make this matter more clear, if possible, let it be borne in mind that the pleasure we feel for a *good* action, and the pain for a *bad* one, are emotions experienced without respect to the opinions of our fellow men. Though we know that no human being can be aware of what we have done, still if the act be in itself good, we will feel pleasure; if evil, pain. An act of kindness to a total stranger; a deed of mercy to a beggar; a word of cheer to some struggling victim of misfortune; a smile, even, bestowed upon a child; all done in secret, with neither the *hope* nor the *expectation* of publicity, will not be without their *reward* in the pleasurable sensations of an approving conscience. While deeds prompted by malice, by envy, by jealousy, by revenge—deeds equally secret, equally without any expectation of public recognition—carry with them, to the mind of the actor, a pang of punishment. Nay, a *thought*, a *purpose*, a *resolve in the soul*, *formed, lodged, confined, and prisoned* there, never allowed to escape, will make him who possesses it happy or miserable as it is good or bad. If you doubt this statement try the experiment. Form an evil purpose toward a neighbor; keep it in your own soul; let it rankle there, and see if it will not make you miserable. Such thoughts

can have no respect to *human* law, or to human lawgivers, as these can take cognizance only of outspoken words and overt acts ; and the punishment experienced points clearly to a being *above* man — a great Moral Lawgiver whose dominion extends to the soul and covers all the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In the very constitution of the soul of man, then, we find these two features proving the existence of a moral governor : 1st. A *discernment of moral distinctions in thoughts and actions* ; and, 2nd. *The presence of rewards and punishments, as our thoughts and actions are good or bad*. Thus much we learn by an appeal to individual consciousness.

Let us now turn to consider

II. The *phenomena bearing upon this point furnished by the history of the world*.

You will bear in mind that we are, in this chapter, looking for facts to prove, not the existence of a lawgiver, a great first cause and ruler of all *simply*, but of a *Moral Governor*, of a being who has, all along, and who to-day governs and controls all events transpiring upon earth, in accordance with certain great moral principles of which enlightened reason enables us to take cognizance.

And now what proof does the history of mankind furnish of the existence of such a Moral Governor ? The limits of this work will allow us to consider but a few out of the many facts and phenomena which might here be cited. And,

1. *No nation has long flourished, or grown ulti-*

mately great and prosperous, which has in its treatment of its own citizens, or in its intercourse with sister nations and kingdoms, disregarded the fundamental principles of morality. We appeal to the history of nations in confirmation of this position. We need not cite particular cases at length. We assert, the *fact*, and challenge denial. Let history be consulted — even infidel history — and let it tell why Assyria and Babylon, why Macedonia and Rome, why Egypt and Idumea are not to-day what they once were. Go stand amid the decaying ruins of Nineveh and Tyre, or look out upon the desert wastes of the valley of the Nile from the tops of the now crumbling pyramids, or planting your feet upon the Acropolis at Athens, or among the prostrate columns of the Amphitheater of Rome, listen to the voice of history which has written upon all the fearful sentence, "*The nation which fears not God shall perish.*" We dwell not upon this fact; we cite it and leave it with you. It would be an insult to the discernment of our readers to infer that they could be blind to the voice of history here. Even a *Volney*, one of the most daring of infidels, moralizing amid the ruins of fallen kingdoms, could not fail to see, in their overthrow, the manifest agency of a mightier than man. But,

2. *The same truth is taught in the history of the Jewish nation especially.* Though men should deny the lesson from *general* history, we have, in the case of this *particular* nation, proof so strong that he who denies it must be reckoned as well nigh insane. That

this people have had an existence for many thousands of years can not be denied. That they have passed through the most astonishing vicissitudes is also most true. To go no farther back than the beginning of the Christian Era, what amazing trials and persecutions have since then befallen them! Driven from Jerusalem by the victorious Romans, they were scattered over the face of the then civilized earth, and yet no where were they received with hospitality. Every where they were met with hostility, as though the whole earth were arrayed against them. The various nations, kingdoms and governments into which they were driven, seemed to vie with each other to render them a hissing and a by-word. Ingenuity exhausted itself in devices to render their condition intolerable. In Egypt, in Asia Minor, in Germany, in Hungary, in Holland, in France, in Spain, and in Portugal, they have been tortured, robbed, and murdered. From many of these countries they have been banished. France and Spain have vied with each other in the enactment of measures to crush out the hated seed; and even England has added the force of her example to that of her less tolerant neighbors. They have been massacred by the thousand in Moravia, reduced to beggary by repeated plunders in Bonn and Bamberg, in Bohemia, Bavaria, Cologne, Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Vienna. In short, the history of the Jewish nation for eighteen hundred years has been a history of the most embittered conflicts, in which the hand of every man has been against them. And

yet, see what they are to-day ! How have they been preserved ? By what power have they been delivered from the overwhelming waves of persecution which have for so many ages surged against them ?

“The preservation of the Jews,” says Basnage, “in the midst of the miseries which they have undergone during seventeen hundred years, is the greatest prodigy that can be imagined. Religions depend upon temporal prosperity ; they triumph under the protection of a conqueror ; they languish and sink with sinking monarchies. Paganism, which once covered the earth, is extinct. The Christian church, glorious in its martyrs, yet was considerably diminished by the persecutions to which it was exposed ; nor was it easy to repair the breaches in it made by those acts of violence.

“But here we behold a church, hated and persecuted for seventeen hundred years, and yet sustaining itself, and widely extending. Kings have often employed the severity of edicts and the hands of executioners to ruin it ; the seditious multitudes, by murders and massacres, have committed outrages still more violent and tragical. Princes and people, Pagans, Mohamedans and Christians, disagreeing in so many things, have united in the design of exterminating it, and have not been able to succeed. The *bush of Moses*, surrounded with flames, ever burns, and is never consumed. The Jews have been expelled, in different times, from every part of the world, which has only served to spread them in all regions. From age to age they have been exposed

to misery and persecution; yet still they subsist, in spite of the ignominy and the hatred that hath pursued them in all places, whilst the greatest monarchies have fallen, and nothing remains of them besides the name."

It is said of Hegel, the distinguished German philosopher and infidel, that he once affirmed that "the existence of the Jewish nation puzzled him more than any other fact for which he has ever attempted to account." And well it might. There is absolutely no way in which this fact can be accounted for, except upon the admission of the existence of a Moral Governor, who rewards for holiness and punishes for sin, and who keeps individuals and nations in existence in order that he may punish. In his providence the identity of this wonderful people has been preserved during these many ages, that the glory of God might be displayed in their remarkable history. He who fails to recognize this truth is blind indeed.

Look now at this wonderful people. Look at their present condition, and then affirm, if you can, that there is *no Moral Governor* — *no God!* As well deny that the *sun* shines, that the *winds blow*, that the tides ebb and flow, or that the moon is subject to periodic changes. It is simply absurd. Denial here is folly so glaring that no prudent man will venture it. But,

3. *The same truth is taught in the special providences which have marked the history of the church in every age.*

This institution has for its object the special work of keeping alive in the earth, and propagating among men, the knowledge and religion of the true God. In advancing this cause she has met, in all ages, with the most determined opposition. Again and again, during her history, has she been in peril, from the malice of foes and the blindness and ignorance of her votaries. A thousand times, to all human appearance, has she been upon the very verge of ruin. Still, in the midst of all, the most wonderful deliverances have been vouchsafed to her. A power mightier than that of man has manifestly interposed in her behalf. The malice of her foes has been rebuked, the blindness of her friends has been overruled, and she stands this day a monument to the undeniable existence of one who is Governor among the nations, of one who "doeth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."

It would be profitable, in the illustration of this part of our subject, to point to instances of the special manifestation of an overruling power in connection with individual churches, or of the whole church during particular emergencies in her history. It is well known that during the years of greatest defection in the Jewish Church, there were yet preserved within her pale a leaven of true piety, so that during the most corrupt period of her history, there yet were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Thus also was it in the Christian Church during what is called the dark ages. When,

to all human appearance, the cause of righteousness was lost, when the truth was apparently utterly overturned by the lava-like influx of soul-ruining error, there were still hundreds of humble Christians preserved as the nucleus of the true church when brighter days should come. Now why were not *all* carried away with the same error which corrupted the mass? Why were any true to the cause of truth and righteousness during these days of defection? It will be impossible to answer this question except upon the ground that there is an overruling Moral Governor who has a care for his church, the great design of which is to promote his glory, and elevate and save the race. The wonderful preservation of the Waldenses during ages of persecution, and the manifest exhibition of super-human aid rendered to Luther and his coadjutors in effecting the reformation of the sixteenth century, need but be cited as most remarkable instances in point. He who can not see in these the working of a hand mightier than man's, must be blind indeed.

4. Another proof of the existence of a Moral Governor is found in the *remarkable detection which has in every age, and among all people, followed the commission of great crimes*. Why, for instance, can murder never be hid? Why has it passed into a proverb, that "*Murder will out*?" Why have men oftentimes confessed their great offences, when no human being knew of their sin but themselves? Do you reply that conscience has something to do with this? What, then, is conscience? and who constitu-

ted it an inward accuser and condemner of the guilty? Why should crimes arouse the conscience, and cause it to goad men until they make acknowledgment of sin—to lash them, as with a scourge of scorpions, until they cry out in their bitter agony, and confess their crimes to rid themselves of the sting of this omnipresent monitor? Refer it to whatever *secondary* cause you may—say it is conscience, if you will; but the impartial will yet see in this undeniable fact, confirmation of the great truth that there is a Moral Governor, whose will it is that the crimes of earth should not remain concealed. There is a God who exposes them. To this conclusion we are bound to come.

5. *Another proof of the same truth is seen in the fact that property acquired dishonestly has been found universally a curse rather than a blessing to its possessor.*

This has been found to be a *universal fact*. Infidels, atheists, men of all creeds and of no creeds, in Christian and in heathen lands, have seen it. It has passed into a proverb, in one form or another, among all people, that ill-gotten gains will not wear. They are apt soon to disappear. They melt away somehow. They can not be retained. And, then, not unfrequently they become a curse to their possessor, to his family, or to both, even while they *are* retained. How often is it seen that gold secured by fraud, by trickery, by unjust means, by oppression, by wrong, by falsehood, poisons the life of him who has it? He uses it for the gratification of his passions, his

lust. He lives high, he drinks, he gambles, he sports; and soon either becomes a beggar, or is early plunged into a dishonored grave.

Or, if this is not the case with the unjust man himself, how often is it seen that his children squander with prodigal hands, and to their ruin, what the father acquired with fraud? How often have sons—and daughters, too—been ruined by property unjustly acquired? Now, why is this? If there is not a Moral Governor, who overrules and controls in all these things, why is it that these results are so universal? If you reply that “such consequences are in accordance with the great fundamental principles of right and wrong; that it can not be otherwise; that it must be so,” then we ask, who ordered this? who decreed that it must be thus? Can there be such a thing as right and wrong, except according to some great moral law? And if there is a moral law, then must it have a source whence it emanated; and that source is God.

6. But still again, *the manifest end or design of afflictions and trials, as sent upon all men, clearly indicates the existence of a Moral Governor.* Nothing can be better established than that all men have their trials. “Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” This is the universal experience. Now why is this? Are these things *sent* upon men, or do they *come by chance*? If *sent*, who sends them? If it is replied that men bring them upon themselves, we ask, Why are they then univer-

sal? Why has no being ever been found who was exempt from trial?

The truth is—a truth almost universally admitted—that *a great end or purpose* is manifest in these afflictions; that end is *discipline*. We do not say that all men are made better by their trials. Far from it. The fire *hardens* if it does not *soften*. But sorrows, afflictions, trials, evidently have a mission; and that mission is one of mercy. These things are manifestly sent to *reform*, to *check*, to *restrain*, to *guide*, to *elevate*, and *save*; and in the case of God's children, this is the invariable result. Hence Paul declares, "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

It is related of the celebrated Rev. Philip Doddridge, that near the close of life he had a remarkable dream. He thought himself dead, and in heaven. When fairly within the pearly gates, an angel came to conduct him through the streets, and show him the wonders of the city. Among other places visited, was a beautiful temple, in one of the magnificent rooms of which Doddridge saw, hanging upon the walls, life-like pictures of what seemed to be the scenes in the earthly life of some human being. Here, as a little child, he was seen falling from the arms of his nurse, while angel hands are placed beneath him to shield him from harm. Farther on, as a lad, he is being thrown from a carriage, by which accident he receives great bodily injury, and is only shielded from a sudden death by the vigilance of angel guardians. In

another picture, he is seen prostrated upon a bed of sickness, enduring weeks of bodily anguish, while consumed with a slow and wasting fever. Recovered from this illness through the use of means owned and blessed of God, he is seen weeping by the bedside of departing loved ones, and bending in agony over the open grave, which has just received the form of some member of his family, dearer to him than his own life, while God himself, by his Holy Spirit, whispers peace to his soul, and overrules, by his grace, the sad bereavement to his growth in holiness. Looking upon these pictures, Doddridge soon discovered that he was taking a view of his own life, and was thus having placed before him the various incidents through which, in the providence of God, he had himself been brought. He was then made to perceive that each successive event of life had been ordered with reference to his spiritual well-being; that the most trifling circumstance which had befallen him had been ordered in infinite love; that from the cradle to the grave, sickness and health, sorrow and joy, life and death, had all been sent or withheld, granted or denied, with reference to his final salvation in a world of glory. With this great truth indelibly impressed upon his soul, he awoke from his dream, never again to lose sight of that Moral Governor in whose hand rested his present and eternal destiny—never again to murmur or repine at whatever might befall him; inasmuch as one sorrow less, one chastisement withheld, one affliction denied, might shut his soul from heaven. *Every*

affliction, every trial, every pang, he now discovered to be *essential* to his eternal felicity.

Now we behold this vast system of Providence, this universal discipline of trial, and noting how this one great end appears to stand out boldly prominent as the purpose of it all, we confidently affirm that it proclaims a Moral Governor who devised it, and who ever lives to overrule it all, to his own glory and the good of his creatures. Trials, afflictions and sorrows, with all their softening, moulding, elevating, sanctifying influences, loudly proclaim the being of a God, who is an intelligent Moral Governor of the universe.

And now, having set before you what we deem to be conclusive proof of the existence of a Moral Governor in the universe, who must be God, we close this chapter with two practical suggestions:

1. The great truth which we have now considered, that there is a supreme Moral Governor, should be greatly comforting to any who are seeking to serve him. Child of God, your labors will not be in vain. This God is near, to aid you in all your endeavors. Do you complain that you are weak? He knows your weakness, and is ready, with his all-sufficiency, to aid you. Do you confess your sins, and are you ready to give way before the power of your temptations? Remember that he can and does sympathize with you, and stands always ready to open up for you a way of escape. Are sorrows and trials yours? Consider their mission. They are sent in love, to lead you nearer and yet nearer to his side.

2. On the contrary, it should be a consideration greatly alarming and awakening to the impenitent, that there exists this God, whose prerogative it is to take cognizance of both good and evil. The inquiry of every unconverted soul should be, "Am I, then, continually under the eye of an all-seeing God — a God so pure and holy that he can not look upon sin with approbation? Is it impossible for me to escape the glance of that eye? What, oh, what am I to do?" There is but this you can do: *Make your peace at once with God, through faith in Jesus Christ. Come to God in Christ, and be saved.* This, by God's help, you can do, and you can do it *now*. Impenitent reader, will you turn to God and live?

"TURN YE, TURN YE, FOR WHY WILL YE DIE?"

CHAPTER III.

“ From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavor and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But O, thou bounteous Giver of all good !
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown.”—COWPER.

“ The Spirit of the Lord spake by me.”—2 SAM. xxii. 1.

WE concluded in our last chapter the argument for the Divine existence from phenomena, having there presented the proofs for the *being* of a God, as drawn, 1st, from the moral nature of man ; and 2nd, from the manifest indications of a moral government as developed in the history of the world and the church. We enter here upon our *third* line of argument : to wit, the *Scriptural*.

In appealing to this department of evidence, let it not be understood that our design is simply *to ask you to consider those texts of the Bible, which affirm the being of a God*. This course might be admissible at a later stage of our investigations, but would be manifestly unsatisfactory *as an argument* at present ; for it might be said, “ What care we for what the book you call the Bible says touching the existence

of God? What *authority* has that book more than any other, that its voice should be heard?" We will not, therefore, quote the Bible in proof of this or any other cardinal doctrine, until we have first shown you, by irrefragable evidence, that it *ought* to be admitted as an inspired, and by consequence, authoritative witness.

What now shall we call *Scriptural* proof of the Divine existence? We answer,

1st. *The existence of the book known as the Bible furnishes a most conclusive argument for the being of a God.*

This argument is based upon the assumption, which we fearlessly make, that no mere man — no set of men — could have produced such a book as this. It is just as impossible for man to have made the Bible as to have made a world. The argument is this: *If the existence of a planet proves a divine power adequate to the production of such a glorious object, the existence of the Bible proves as conclusively the existence of a Being glorious beyond comparison, whose infinite wisdom and matchless knowledge were alone adequate to the production of such a book.*

Our position here is simple and clear; a child can comprehend it. The Bible did not produce itself; some power above and outside of itself must have produced it. Yet it is a production as manifestly above the ability of man, as would the creation of the world on which we live. In other words, it would be just as rational to say that man, with his known and acknowledged finite capacity, could create

a world, as that he could write such a book as the Bible. *But this book exists.* There it is, just as the world exists ; just as the sun, moon and stars exist ; and its existence proves the being of a God. And now, in order that you may see that this is more than mere assertion, let us look at a few peculiarities of the Bible which clearly demonstrate its *divine* origin. And,

1st. *Consider the wonderful harmony which pervades all the utterances of the sacred volume, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation.*

The force of this consideration, and its bearing upon the present discussion, will appear in the light of the fact that no less than *forty* persons were employed in the writing of the Scriptures ; that they lived not in one age or nation, but that the first lived and wrote seventeen hundred years before the birth of Christ, and the last nearly one hundred years after the Saviour was born ; so that not less than eighteen hundred years of the world's history intervened between the writing of the first and last books of the finished canon of Scripture.

Let this fact be pondered, for we deem it an important one in the elucidation of the point before us. The *harmony* of Scripture teaching can not be denied. There is nothing in Bible *history*, as given by Moses, which is denied or contradicted by Christ or his Apostles. Ezra and Nehemiah hold and teach the same truths which are promulgated by Paul and Peter, by James and John. David and Solomon,

Isaiah and Daniel, have the same doctrinal beliefs, and enforce the same practical duties, which are found in the writings of Amos and Zachariah, Matthew, Mark and Luke. Though men have affected to find disagreements and antagonisms, they have been unable, when the matter was thoroughly investigated, to substantiate their claims. *Scripture harmony* has stood upon a basis too firm to be moved; one tone, in perfect accord, without a discordant note, runs through the whole sacred volume. It is *one truth ; one utterance ; one voice ; one grand symphony of praise* to the glory of the author of the universe. We may, without fear, challenge the whole infidel world to find one Scripture doctrine or teaching at variance with another, or out of harmony with the great end and purpose of the whole.

Now, is it reasonable to suppose that forty men, left to themselves, living at so great a distance from each other, both as to time and place, without power to confer or consult with each other, could have produced a book upon a theme so difficult as that of religion, and yet have harmonized so fully with each other ?

To make this matter more clear, let it be remembered that there have been men who have written in different ages upon questions by no means so difficult to discuss as religion, and yet no ten, or five, or *two, even*, have been able fully to agree. Take the subject of *political economy*, or *agriculture*, or *commerce*, and examine what the writers of ten consecutive centuries have recorded upon these respective themes, and

you will at once discover that there can be no reconciliation of their conflicting opinions. *They are in a hopeless antagonism.*

We have a remarkable exemplification of the truth of this statement in the conflicts among mental and moral philosophers. From the days of Plato until the present moment, we have had men who have written upon the phenomena of the human mind—a theme by no means so difficult as that discussed in Scripture—and yet what is the result? Does not every one know; is it not patent to the whole world, that the philosophers are all at variance? Socrates differs radically from Solon; Plato from Socrates; Aristotle from Plato; Origen from Aristotle; the School-men from Origen; Bacon from the School-men; Reid from Bacon; Stuart from Reid; Sir William Hamilton from Stuart; Cousin from Sir William Hamilton; and Emerson, and Mill, and Herbert Spencer from them all! The east has been arrayed against the west, and the west against the east; Germany against France, and France against Germany; while Scotland and England have maintained a warfare against each other, which has only been suspended while they have each fought against the Continental metaphysicians.

Now what does all this demonstrate? Why this: that no forty men on earth could have written the Bible, so marked by the unity and harmony of its sentiments, *had they not been under the constant control of one great leading mind.* Though the time in which the Bible was being written stretched over a

period of eighteen hundred years ; though the writers were surrounded by the strongest temptations, oftentimes, to vary from the one uniform testimony ; though it was not unfrequently persecution and death to proclaim the truth ; still from the utterances of Moses, in Genesis, down to the last solemn declarations of John, in the Isle of Patmos, whither he was banished for his fidelity to the great unbroken Scriptural testimony of the ages, we have but *one* utterance, one voice, one grand and glorious whole. We challenge the entire infidel world to produce a parallel to this in the works of man. We defy them to account for this wondrous feature of revelation upon any other theory than that there is a God, of whose own wondrous mind the Bible is the matchless product.

And then to strengthen this view of the case, let it be particularly considered, that this *harmony* to which we have referred is not the dead, unbroken uniformity which characterizes the works of man, where one is a mere copyist of another. No, the *harmony* of the Scriptures is the harmony which marks all the works of nature ; a harmony which at the same time comports with a beautiful *variety* — a *unity in variety* to which it is impossible for man to attain. Let us explain :

If you step out into the forest, you will every where see trees possessing the same *general* characteristics — a similarity which at once identifies them as the production of *one* glorious Creator. You will see, for instance, that they all have roots and fibers,

by which they cling to the earth, and through which they draw nourishment from the soil. You will see that they all have a main trunk, which usually, a little way above the earth, parts into limbs; that these limbs are armed with twigs, and that these again are clothed in spring and summer with soft and beautiful leaves. Looking a little more closely, you will discover that every tree is provided with small conduits or channels beneath the bark, and that through these flow the sap which serves to keep the tree alive, and which adds annually to its growth and vigor.

Now, in looking upon a whole forest, we say, "these are the points of unity; the things which indicate the *harmony* which is apparent in the groves to the eye of every beholder."

But then we will see a great *variety* there also — and a *variety in entire* CONSISTENCY with this *harmony*. We will see that all the trees are not of one size — some being large and some small; that all are not of the same kind — some being oak, and some maple, and some beech, and some birch, and some pine, and some hemlock, and some walnut.

We will see that each variety may be distinguished by the texture and color of its bark, and by the fibers of its wood. We will see the greatest contrast between the leaves of each; that they differ, in short, in a score of ways; and yet there is, after all, such unity that we say this variety does not in the least disturb our minds. It only shows the infinite resources at the command of the God of Nature.

While in its great leading peculiarities — the

essentials—each tree must be, and is like every other, it is yet the glory of the Maker that he is not confined to *one* mode of manifesting his creative power.

And thus it is in every department of being; *unity in variety*, and *variety in strict consistency with unity* is every where apparent. It is one of the things which distinguishes the works of an infinite mind. Look at the animal kingdom; look at the mineral kingdom; look at the human race. No two objects, no two bodies, no two minds are alike; and yet, though there is such a variety, such a difference, still who can doubt that all came from the same glorious source?

And now it is to a like peculiarity of the Bible that we desire here to call special attention. You will find, by a careful perusal of its pages, the utmost *variety*, in *consistency*, at the same time, with the *harmony* of which we have spoken. There is displayed, for instance, a great variety of style—plain narrative, glowing poetry, fervid prophecy, calm, dispassionate history, and simple biography.

There is here an unfolding of all the passions of the soul—tender love, gushing sympathy, flowing compassion, scathing sarcasm, bitter irony, exultant hope, bounding joy, wailing sorrow, and black despair. We have here lessons for every sex and every age, counsel for every emergency, light for every hour of darkness sweets for every cup of bitterness, and supports for every burden imposed by the innumerable vicissitudes of daily life. We have

here heights which can not be scaled by the tireless wing of an archangel, and depths of mystery which a seraph could not fathom. Within the compass of a few hundred pages, we have compressed more true philosophy, more reliable history, more instructive biography, more living poetry, more necessary knowledge, more satisfactory revelations, than we find in *all* the writings of all the ancients and moderns besides. If, this hour, all the libraries of earth were heaped into one vast pile, and then sunk into the bowels of the earth, never more to be seen, the loss would be as nothing in comparison with the loss of this one book — so full of wisdom — so rich and varied in its character.

And yet all this fullness and variety is in entire accordance with its one great purpose. The whole of this wonderful treasure is a *unit* upon the great theme of salvation. All its poetry, its prophecy, its history, its biography; all its revelations of human passions, the unfoldings of love, of compassion, of sympathy, of anger, jealousy and revenge; all its truthful biography, detailing even the sins and imperfections of the followers of God; all its revelations of the purposes of Jehovah, and all its unfoldings of the devices of angels and of men, every doctrinal statement, every practical injunction, every detailed narrative or brief comprehensive hint, suggestion or announcement; every thing, in short, contained in this wonderful book, bears upon, and is intimately connected with the one great purpose of the whole — the salvation of a lost and ruined world

through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of the ever-living God.

The botanist, in ranging the forest, may find a plant, or shrub, or tree, which may seem to him an anomaly. He will not know where to place it—how to classify it. It will seem at first as scarcely belonging to the vegetable kingdom. But as he studies farther, he finds here and there some traces of resemblance to the other products around; a stamen, a pistil, a leaf, or a flower, will show, by some unmistakable mark, that what before seemed anomalous, *is indeed in harmony* with the whole works of God in the vegetable kingdom. So in reading the Scriptures, you may come to a passage which appears in no wise connected either with what goes before, or with what comes after. Nay, a *whole* narrative or book, as the history of Ruth and Naomi, or the life of Esther, the beautiful queen of Ahasuerus, may seem utterly without a purpose. But as you read, you will find that what you regarded as *useless* is *absolutely* essential to the perfection of the record, just as in the instances cited, the touching narrative of Ruth is absolutely essential to prove Christ's descent from David; and Ruth herself being a Moabitess of the Gentile race, but honored in being adopted into the family of God to become one of the ancestors of Jesus, is a type of what Christ was to become—*the Saviour of the whole world*, the Redeemer of all who should believe in him, both Jews and Gentiles.

And thus is it with *every* portion of the sacred

record. With that same wonderful *variety* which characterizes all the works of God, there is a marked harmony in the whole. One great end and purpose is subserved by the *whole* record—the *glory of God in the redemption* of a ruined world.

The following eloquent thoughts upon this same general subject, extracted from "Life Lessons in the School of Duty," by the Rev. E. H. Gillett, D.D., will not be without interest to the reader :

"What a wonderful book the Bible is! The marvel of literature; the text-book of the world! Where is there any thing like it in all the writings of men? It is the only book extant which may be called a book for all, or that is equally adapted to all. You put it into the child's hand, and he grows old reading it, but it has new charms to the last, and is unexhausted still. The hoary head bends over it, not less intent than the eyes that gleam out under the fair young brow, tracing lines that have been traced a hundred times, but which are still as fresh and bright as ever. Childish simplicity is taught the deepest truths, and readily apprehends them, while separate books, or even chapters of the volume task the ingenuity and exhaust the learning of deep-read scholars. The peasant pores over it in his hovel, and the nobleman in his palace, and it is alike a teacher for both. The thankful heart finds in it the language of praise, and the penitent heart adopts its forms of contrition. The soldier reads it in camp, or in the intervals of battle, and the widow reads in it as she comes back from the new-made grave, 'the

Lord is thy husband.' The patriarch of four score reads it by his fireside, and the lisping prattler on his knee is charmed by its stories from the old man's lips. How could you teach youth a simpler petition than our Lord's prayer; and how could the profoundest learning frame any thing more comprehensive, appropriate, or sublime?

"Suppose you invited all the wisdom and genius of the world to-day to combine their energies to frame a text-book of morals and religion, which should go alike to the Englishman's castle and the Hottentot's kraal, with Kane to the polar seas, and Livingstone to African deserts; that the professor of law should tell his students to read for its sublime morality; a book that should do more than the wisdom of all codes to shape the legislation of nations, and more than all science to overthrow the temples and the idols of pagan nations; a book that a mother should put in her boy's knapsack when he goes forth to the scenes of battle, and to which she turns herself for consolation when she learns that he sleeps with the untombed dead; a book that shall guide the footsteps of erring youth, and pillow the hope of the departing spirit; a book in which a Newton, a Herschel, a Brewster, and a Mitchel shall devoutly confess they discover truths more glorious than their telescopes reveal, and which shall have power to change the savage to a man; and does any one imagine that the ripest civilization of the nineteenth century, garnering up all the lore and experience of ages, could produce such a book?

Philosophers read Lord Bacon, and scholars study Plato, and in these men you find the ripest thought of centuries and of generations; but what are they to the laborer or the school-boy? nay, how their ripest thoughts die out as a meteor-flash, when you read the wonderful parables of the man of Nazareth, or listen to the utterances of his sermon on the Mount!

“No wonder that the book is cherished. No wonder that precious memories of it are twined about the past, and the brightest rainbow hues of the future are borrowed from the hopes it inspires. It is associated with all that is dearest to the human heart. The old family record grows almost sacred, interleaved with these pages. The dying parent goes to this fountain to find words of farewell counsel to those he leaves behind. Here is what we repeat at the bridal; here is what we read at the burial. Here is the chapter for family devotion, and here the text for the sanctuary. The richest bequest of parental piety comes from the teachings of this book; and with the last memorial of the departed, we trace on the tombstone some ‘holy text’ which it has enshrined.

“What is the meaning of all this in connection with a book penned largely by shepherds and fishermen? There is but one answer. Here is God’s text-book for the race, adapted to every capacity and to every lot. This tree of wisdom, beneath whose shadow we gather to learn lessons beyond all that was taught in Platonic groves, is a tree of God’s

planting. It is rooted in the soil of the distant centuries. It spreads its fibers beneath Sinai and Calvary. The spirit of God breathes through its whispering leaves, and the songs of prophets, and apostles, and martyrs yet wake living echoes beneath its branches. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, and its fruit is the fruit of the tree of life. Humanity itself pants for a place beneath its shade."

And now our argument is before you. There is the Bible with its wonderful unity and variety. Account for it as you may, there is but one conclusion to which the dispassionate, the unprejudiced mind will come. *The existence of this most wonderful book can be accounted for only* by admitting the being of God. An infinite mind is demanded in the production of such a volume.

It shall be our aim to attempt to strengthen this position in the next chapter, by examining a little more minutely the *contents* of this remarkable production of Divine wisdom. And now we close by asking — Have we indeed a book written by God? Have we a volume prepared for us by the Divine mind? Has God been at the pains — so to speak — of preparing for us a book which contains a revelation of his will to man? Yes; this we fully believe. And here it is in our own language. We can read it if we will. It treats of the most solemn and weighty interests. It unfolds a world to come. It draws the veil which shuts out from us the future. It tells of heaven and hell — of endless joy and endless misery.

And are you, O, reader ! indifferent to this book ? Can it lie upon your shelves ; upon your tables ; unnoticed and unread ? God forbid. Take it ; O, take it as the man of your counsel, as the guide of your life. Into eternity you must go. Would you be ignorant of its solemn verities ? Would you go down to death like one going out into the darkness — not knowing where your next step will land you ? Surely, this is not wise ; it is not necessary ; to this you are not doomed.

Here is the Bible ; use it ; it will cast a strong light over all the future, and make you wise unto eternal life.

“ Within this ample volume lies
The mystery of mysteries ;
Happiest they of human race
To whom their God has given grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way ;
And better had they ne’er been born,
That read to doubt, or read to scorn.”

CHAPTER IV.

"'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more."—COWPER.

"Every word of God is pure."—PROVERBS xxx. 5.

IN the last chapter we entered upon the Scriptural argument for the being of God. It was there affirmed that the EXISTENCE of *such a book as the Bible* could only be accounted for satisfactorily by admitting the existence of an *all-wise, omniscient* Being from whom it emanated, just as we account satisfactorily for the existence of the world only by assuming the existence of an omnipotent Creator, by whom it was made. In illustration of this position, the *wonderful harmony* of the various parts of Scripture was cited; and also the variety noticeable in the sacred writings — there being in Scripture, as we discover, the same wonderful *unity in variety, and variety in unity*, which clearly proclaim the skill and wisdom of an *infinite* mind in all departments of nature.

It is our desire now, to *strengthen* still further the position taken in the last chapter, by a somewhat more minute investigation of the *contents* of the Bible.

You know that a person, in looking at a human body, might say, "The very *existence* of such a wonderful object as this — so complete in all its appointments and organs — shows clearly that it had a most wonderful Creator. Its *outward* appearance strongly favors this assumption." But then he might go farther and say, "An examination of its *inward* structure and organism may still further strengthen this position. I will therefore see what is *beneath* the surface of this body; I will take it apart, piece by piece, and if the *whole* not only, but *each separate part* also demonstrates a Creator, of superhuman skill and wisdom, then is the argument complete." Now this is just what it is proposed to do with the Bible. We shall ask you to look at it minutely and in detail, believing that you will not fail to find in this investigation *proof irrefragable* of the being of a God. And,

1. Let us notice the *grand conception of the Divine character contained in Scripture*. No mere human being, of himself, ever conceived such an idea of God as the Bible contains. It is an idea as far above what the unaided human mind could have reached, as a *world* is more glorious than an *ant-hill*.

Look at it! "*God is a Spirit!*" Who but God himself could have told us that? "*Infinite!*" Who would ever have thought of that? Did ever a

heathen mind conceive of an infinite God? No, not one. Their deities were all limited, restricted, circumscribed beings. "*Eternal*"—"from everlasting to everlasting"—without beginning or end of being! Whence came that conception—so grand—so manifestly beyond all human invention? No unaided human mind could ever have discovered this idea, or framed a thought so manifestly superhuman. "*Unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.*" This is the Bible conception of God—a conception as manifestly from God himself, and hence as clearly proving his existence as the sun in the heavens.

That you may see that what we affirm here is not unfounded assertion, let a contrast be drawn between the *Scriptural* conception of Deity, and that to which in heathen lands the unaided human mind has attained. Go to India and Egypt; to China and Japan; to the wilds of Africa and of South America, and mark the best and highest conceptions of God which these nations have ever reached. In India, his most popular representative is the Ganges; while in the repulsive idols from Juggernaut down through a long and degrading list of images of wood, and clay, and stone, he is dishonored to an extent almost inconceivable to a rational mind. In Egypt, the crocodile is one of the most common objects of adoration; while more than thirty thousand creatures, including every conceivable beast, and bird, and creeping reptile, is honored as the Creator. And this is but a specimen of what is seen wherever the Scriptures

have not gone with their grand, and beautiful, and rational conception of Deity. It may perhaps be urged that the more cultivated heathen nations, ancient and modern, had attained to much nobler ideas of God than these. And yet where is the proof of this? Look at the deities of Greece and Rome! What was Jupiter, the chief of all the gods, but a tyrant and a libertine? What was Venus but the synonym of all that was most lustful, vile and impure? What Mars, and Vulcan, and Minerva, and the whole catalogue of Olympus, but beings distinguished from the mass of depraved men and women upon the earth chiefly by their superior ability and power to gratify their unsanctified ambition — their beastly passions — their unbridled lusts? O, what a world-wide difference between what unaided man ever dreamed of Deity, and the pure, the holy, the immaculate God of revelation! God only knows himself truly, fully, and he only could have revealed this knowledge to his creatures.

And then it imparts emphasis to this view when we recall to mind the fact that all heathen nations had at one time a knowledge of the true God. The original condition of man was not one of heathenism. God gave to our first parents, and through them to all their posterity, a correct knowledge of himself. His true nature was known to Adam and his descendants; but through the depravity of the heart of man this knowledge was lost. The ideas of man touching Deity became gradually less clear and less distinct; less

pure and less rational; until among the peoples where the Bible was unknown, the most gross and sensual conceptions of him prevailed. It is not difficult to see where the true light is found at the present day. It surely is not among the Egyptians, with their thirty thousand deities, nor with the Hindoos, who according to some, worship not less than three hundred and thirty millions of idols. It is not found with the Chinese nor Japanese, the Esquimaux, nor South Sea Islanders. All these, "not wishing to retain God in their knowledge," "have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Right reason rejects all these degrading conceptions of Deity, and says at once, "*that alone is a worthy conception of God which is contained in the Bible.*" The grand, ennobling characteristics of Deity, unfolded in Scripture, are alone worthy the true God." This is the utterance of enlightened reason. Then,

2. There is the Bible *doctrine of creation*; the sublime statement that God made all things of nothing by the word of his power; that he SPAKE, and all things sprang into being.

It was an axiom among the wisest philosophers of heathenism, "*that something could not come from nothing.*" And they were resting in the unreasonable dogma *that the matter of the universe must have been eternal.* To the sublime conception of the Bible truth they never could have attained. The combined wisdom of earth never could have reached a height

so sublime as this. God only *knew* that he made the worlds out of nothing; and the Bible recording it proves the being of a God.

The argument upon this point is one which can be easily comprehended. No man unacquainted with the teachings of Scripture would have concluded that all things were made of nothing; that all worlds and systems of worlds were spoken into being by the omnipotent fiat of the self-existent God. But the Bible reveals this truth, and now that it is revealed, we see the reasonableness of it. The judgments of men *approve* what their reasons could never have reached had it not been revealed. They say at once, "Here is a teaching of the most glorious character, accounting in a manner entirely satisfactory for a wonderful fact otherwise shrouded in impenetrable mystery. *Man* was not present when God made the worlds, and therefore could not have known *how* it was done. This great fact was known *only* to God. Dull, senseless matter, did not make itself; it surely is not eternal; it must have had a beginning; and the author of its being, its Creator, must be the Uncreated Intelligence we know as God." Here the soul rests satisfied, and here only. Then again,

3. *The majesty and perfection of the moral law loudly proclaim the existence of God.* Take the ten commandments, and read them carefully, and tell me whence did they emanate? Never was the mind of man capable of conceiving of such sublime principles as are uttered in the decalogue. The laws of Solon, the statutes of Lycurgus, the precepts of Confucius,

are peurile and contemptible in the comparison. Statesmen, the most enlightened of earth, have pronounced the ten commandments the very consummation of wisdom. Considering that the age in which they were promulgated was one of great darkness; considering that Moses was reared and educated at a heathen court, where he could not have acquired the sublime morality taught in the decalogue; considering, too, that every one of those commands stands in direct antagonism to the suggestions and desires of the unsanctified mind and the unconverted heart of man, and they must ever present an enduring monument of the existence of a Divine Being.

We read the laws of Greece and Rome, of India and of Egypt; we examine the noblest works of unconverted men in the framing of statutes for states and kingdoms, and we are *amazed* at the superiority of that matchless code given at Sinai thirty-five hundred years ago. *The decalogue is perfect.* It contains our whole duty to God and to man. In the compass of a single page it compresses precepts which cover the whole field of morality — the entire domain of duty. It commences just where enlightened reason says it should commence — *with God*, the promotion of whose glory is the primary object of all creation, and extends to man — our brother — made in the image of God. It enjoins a perfect religion, and inculcates a spotless morality. Unlike human laws and human statutes, which can only reach the outward life, the decalogue takes cognizance of the *soul*,

reaches to the *spirit*, regulates the *heart*, commands the *thoughts*, and is binding upon the inmost nature of every human being. In reading the decalogue the thoughtful are *impressed* and awed by it, in spite of themselves. We *feel* that these are not the words of man — that these are not the injunctions of a fellow-worm. Our emotions are not unlike the sensations we experience in listening to the thunder's dreadful roar, or witnessing the grand sweep of the tornado, or the terror-inspiring gleam of the lightning. There are sentiments awakened by these phenomena of nature which *man*, by no act of his own, can inspire. He may *seek to imitate* the thunder, the lightning, and the whirlwind, but the results of his efforts are so imperfect, so utterly beneath the reality, that they excite our pity. Who doubts, when he looks out upon the heaven-piercing altitudes of the Alps and the Appenines, that the feelings of awe awakened by these sublimities bear witness to the hand of an infinitely glorious Creator? What work of man ever inspired such awe, or awoke such mingled feelings of reverence and fear as Mount Blanc or Chimborazo? Man may build his vast cathedral piles, and rear his pyramids, and push heavenward his towers of Babel, but what are they in comparison with the cloud-piercing mountains reared by the almighty Architect of all worlds? So is it with human laws, and statutes framed by human legislators. They compare with the decalogue as *imperfection* with *perfection*; as the *finite* with the *infinite*; as the *human* with the *divine*.

What human law but has required revision? What human statute but has had need of improvement? Even the constitutions of states and kingdoms, framed with all the care and skill attainable as the fundamental laws — the very corner-stones of society — have needed amendment as years have rolled away, but the laws of God — the ten commandments, given at Sinai thirty-five hundred years ago — stand to-day, as they will stand forever, glorious in their imperishable perfection, their unchanging and unchangeable freshness, majesty and beauty. Who devised them? Who framed them? Let infidels answer if they can. If there is not a God, then is the decalogue the profoundest mystery on earth. You may assume, if you can, that *matter* is *eternal*, that the *sun* is from *everlasting*; but, we ask, *who framed the decalogue?*

4. *But still further; the wonderful teaching of Scripture concerning holiness as the great object of human attainments, demonstrates the Divine existence.*

The religion of the Bible differs from all other religions essentially in this, that it alone insists upon *holiness* in man in order to eternal felicity. Other systems make *virtue*, and *honesty*, and *charity*, and *justice*, and *equity*, and *general morality*, the grand objects to whose pursuit they urge their votaries with more or less of earnestness and zeal; but *not one* — we assert this without qualification — *not one system of religion* framed by man has ever attained to the high and sublime conception of *holiness* as the ultimate aim of the soul. Did you ever think of this?

Now, we ask, whence a conception so manifestly superhuman? How could man have known that there was such a thing as *holiness*, or that it was attainable; had there not been a God to declare it? The unaided human mind could never have reached the height of this sublime grace — this transcendent qualification — had not God said, “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” “Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.” All *merely human ideas* fall as far short of the Scripture one here, as the highest attainments in sculpture and painting fall short of nature. If we were to ask the atheist, “Whence the Bible idea of holiness, if there be no God?” we would be compelled to wait in vain for an answer. That grand fundamental teaching of Scripture, so manifestly superhuman, demonstrates the divine existence.

Indeed, *holiness* is something of which the world, of itself, knows nothing. This is a grace of which man must have remained forever ignorant, had not the Bible revealed it. And, finding this wondrous doctrine clearly contained in Scripture, our argument is that of the physiologist who would infer the existence of a glorious Creator from the wonderful character of some specific organ of the human system. He looks, for instance, at the eye. He examines it carefully. He discovers its beautiful mechanism. He considers its adaptability to the end designed. He studies its coatings, its humors, its delicate curtains, its wonderful properties and qualities, so manifestly superhuman, and he says at once, “This did not come by chance—it did not make itself. No

mortal could have planned it, or conceived it. Its *existence*, therefore, *proves* a divine mind — a superhuman architect." So with the doctrine of holiness found incorporated in that wonderful *body of truth* known as the Bible. How did it come there? Whose mind conceived it? Is it earthly? Is it of man? No, no. To account for its presence in the Bible, we *must* assume the existence of an Infinite Mind — an intèlligence, superhuman and divine. No other conclusion will satisfy the soul.

It is a remarkable fact, illustrative of this position, that even in Christian lands, and among peoples supposed to be familiar with Scriptural ideas, this matter of *holiness* is so grossly misunderstood. The great mass seem unable to conceive of it as any thing more than *virtue* or *morality*. So far from its being true that man could ever have attained, of himself, to a knowledge of this wondrous blessedness, it seems impossible for him to *grasp* it, even, after it is revealed. He mistakes both the *nature* of it, and the *source* from which it emanates. He conceives of it as the practice of moral duties, as the observance of a virtuous line of conduct, as abstinence from vice and crime. This is to misapprehend its nature altogether. Virtue and morality are embraced in it, but it is a grace which lies wholly *behind* all virtue. It is a higher, nobler thing than was ever dreamed of by the mere moralist. It is a sanctity *born* of the Holy Spirit's presence, and indwelling in the soul of the regenerate. It is known only to him who is born again. It is the secret of the Lord, which is

found alone with those who have passed from death to life, and in whose souls Christ has been formed the hope of glory. To the world a *mystery*—to the Christian an *experience*—its presence in the Bible as a revelation, demonstrates the *existence* of its Author.

And thus we might go forward, enumerating one after another all the great cardinal teachings of the sacred volume, to the same purpose; we could successfully point you to the doctrine of the *fall of man*, as alone satisfactorily accounting for the present condition of the world, morally and spiritually; we could appeal to the doctrines of repentance, faith, and obedience—so *reasonable*, as duties lying at the foundation of a holy life; we might point you to the grand conception of a radical change of heart as necessary to salvation—a conception so manifestly superhuman that when first presented to the mind we are confounded, and forced to cry, with Nicodemus of old, “How *can* these things be?” We might refer to the “*golden rule*,” which, in a word, contains a more perfect system of morality than all the writings of the sages.

We might point to that wondrous *law of love* which is every where inculcated in the sacred record—a law to be observed not only in the intercourse of *friends*, but of *enemies* as well. We might point you to the grand doctrine of the atonement—that God is reconciling the world unto himself through the death of his Son; a doctrine of which man never could have dreamed, and yet the only one which

presents one ray of hope to ruined humanity. We might point you to the Sermon on the Mount, to the Lord's Prayer, to the doctrine of the soul's immortality, the resurrection of the body, the doctrine of future rewards and punishments—a heaven of perfect spiritual felicity and a hell of endless woe—to *all these distinctive teachings of the Scriptures*, might we appeal, and *in them all* behold the most conclusive proof of the divine existence. Just as the devout anatomist, having satisfied himself that the general structure of the human body proves a divine Creator of that body, then proceeds to an examination of *the brain, the lungs, the heart, the stomach, the viscera*, and finds in each and in all a wonderful confirmation of his belief—*so we* not only find in the Bible, viewed as a whole, evidence that there is an All-Wise God, but in its several parts, in its specific doctrines and duties, its laws and precepts, its institutions and ordinances, clearly discover the strongest confirmation of our faith.

This, however, is as far as we can at present go; and we close with two or three remarks:

1. How little do men realize their indebtedness to the Word of God! How little would have been known, concerning our relations to God, or our destiny for eternity, had it not been revealed to us in Scripture? We boast of our *knowledge*, of the extent of our *information*, of our *intelligence*; but fail to give credit to Him to whom alone credit is due. How could we have learned from the light of nature, that our highest duty is to love the Lord

with all the heart, soul, mind and strength? And yet how reasonable does this duty appear, when once we are made acquainted with it by Scripture! How could we have ever learned, from the light of nature, that our duty to our fellow-men was to do unto them as we would that they should do unto us? And yet how comprehensive and how just does this Scripture precept appear! How could we have known that we were immortal—that our souls were destined either for endless bliss or endless woe—if God had not in mercy made known to us these important facts? Life or death—eternal bliss or eternal woe—are brought to light in the Gospel alone.

2. What a manifestation of the divine solicitude in man's behalf, is the revelation contained in Scripture! Was God under any obligation to make known to us the great teachings of his Word? Was it a necessity resting upon him, to reveal to us our sinfulness, our obligations to him, our immortality, an eternity of bliss or of woe, and the way of life through Jesus Christ our Lord? Far from it. God was not indebted to us; he was not under any obligations to us. The wondrous revelations of Scripture, then, were made through the *sovereign mercy and grace* of a God solicitous for man's salvation. It was the love of God which prompted him to make to earth the disclosures contained in the sacred volume. Hence, it can not be otherwise than that these teachings are for our temporal and eternal well-being. How important, therefore, that we heed the injunction of the divine Redeemer, "Search the Scriptures,

for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

3. If, then, these wondrous revelations of Scripture were made for man's temporal and eternal well-being, and if they are the product of the infinite solicitude of God in our behalf, how guilty must he be who neglects or rejects the teachings of the sacred volume! This is no ordinary book; the merest glance at it will show us this. Nor is it a book filled with speculations, or conjectures, or theories. Its doctrines and precepts are intensely practical. They relate to the conduct of each day, each hour. They have a bearing upon all our relations in this life, and upon the higher interests of eternity. To neglect these teachings, then, to ignore them, to live as though the Bible were not — as thousands do — is to exhibit a most stolid indifference to one's best and dearest interests; and to reject these teachings and precepts, is to expose the soul to the wrath of a justly offended God.

Reader, how is it with you? You live in a land of Bibles — are you indifferent to Bible truth? You are surrounded with light, streaming from the throne of God — do you yet walk in darkness? You are hastening, with the rapidity of the arrow's flight, to eternity and to the bar of God — are you yet unconverted and unsaved? Let this be your reproach no longer; but, turning at once to God in Christ, take his blessed Word to be your light and guide, even unto death.

"SEEK YE THE LORD, WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND;
CALL YE UPON HIM, WHILE HE IS NEAR."

CHAPTER V.

“The book — this holy book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity —
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last.”

POLLOCK.

“I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning.”—ISAIAH xlv. 9, 10.

WE called attention, in the last chapter, to the fact that the Bible contains statements of doctrine and truths, which are so far above what is possible for man to know of *himself*, that we must conclude that there is a God who has revealed them. We cited, in proof of this position, the teachings of the Bible touching the character of God, the creation of all things from nothing, the fall of man, the doctrine of *holiness* in order to happiness, the necessity of regeneration, the atonement through the sacrifice of Christ, the resurrection of the body, a future judgment, a heaven of eternal felicity, and a hell of endless woe. We referred also, in proof of our position, to the majesty, perfection and beauty of the moral law as

embodied in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, to the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the comprehensive moral precept, "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you," commonly called the Golden Rule. In all these doctrines, precepts, and parts of Scripture, we saw an excellence and glory so far transcending the highest attainments of the unaided human intellect, that we are forced to the conclusion that there is a divine Being from whom alone they could emanate.

We are not, however, through with this part of our argument. Conclusive as our positions have hitherto been, there are yet other grounds in this same connection, still further confirmatory of the great fact of God's existence. In reading the Scriptures, we find not only the remarkable doctrines and principles, and teachings, to which reference was made in the last chapter, *but we find predictions or prophecies which none but a God of infinite knowledge could have made*—not mere guesses and conjectures, but *veritable predictions* of future events.*

Now if it can be clearly shown that there are in

* In quoting the *prophecies* of Scripture in this, and the *miracles* recorded in Scripture, in the following chapter, we regard the Bible simply as a book *whose record of facts has never been impeached*. As yet we do not appeal to it as *inspired*, but only ask for its statements the credit due to any other credible historical writings. The reader should never forget that, let the subject of *inspiration* be settled as it may, the Bible, as a *record of facts*, remains an *unimpeached and unimpeachable* witness for God. The impression is altogether too general, that if the advocates of *inspiration* fail to sustain their positions, the Bible is *disposed of*, and infidelity has the argument. Not so. The Bible, with its wondrous teachings, its undeniable prophetic revelations, and its unimpeached record of facts, remains to be accounted for.

the Bible, not two or three, but scores of such prophecies, so minute, so particular, so well defined in all their essential features, that there can be no reasonable question in regard to them, then the conclusion will be this: "There is a God, for only a *Divine* Being can foreknow and reveal things yet future." And this argument will be one which every person can understand. It needs no lengthened discussion to prove that *God alone* can foresee what is yet in the distant future. Atheists and infidels themselves have admitted the force of this position, and so difficult have they found it to resist the power of the argument based upon *prophecy*, that they have resorted to all manner of subterfuges to turn it aside, even asserting in some cases, that the records must have been written after the events.

Our purpose, then, in this chapter, will be to lay before the reader and briefly to elucidate a few of the leading predictions of Scripture, reminding you *that the existence of these prophecies proves beyond question the being of a God who gave them.*

A very slight acquaintance with the Bible will reveal the fact that almost at the *opening* of the sacred volume we are confronted with prophetic announcements. We find several in connection with the events which transpired in the garden of Eden. There was *one* fearfully verified in the sad history of the whole human family, which was pronounced before the fall: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." None but God could truthfully say this, for none but he could know what the

result would be upon the eating, by our first parents, of the fruit of the forbidden tree. And yet this prediction was literally fulfilled. The devil had met this prophetic declaration of the Almighty with a positive denial. His assertion made to the woman was, "Ye shall *not* surely die." The result demonstrated God's truthfulness, and that Satan was a liar from the beginning. Never was "*death*" more real, more terrible, than that which followed the revelation of the divine injunction in the garden. Then *died* man's holiness and happiness, his delightful communion with God, his innocence, his joy, his peace. Then died his privilege of securing eternal felicity by his own works; and in that same disastrous moment death temporal seized upon his body, and death spiritual and eternal fastened upon his soul. What an awful fulfillment of the first recorded prediction!

Then immediately after the fall there are *three* predictions: one concerning Eve, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children;" one concerning Adam, "In the sweat of thy face and in sorrow shalt thou eat bread all thy days, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" and one concerning Satan, the tempter — the most remarkable of all, because it contains a clear prediction of Christ, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Without pausing to enter upon a minute investigation of these prophecies, we merely cite them, and ask, who but a God of infinite knowledge could have known the things

here distinctly stated? Eve was not yet a mother; Adam had not yet tilled the earth; Christ, the seed of the woman, did not come to bruise the serpent's head until four thousand years after the utterance of this prophecy. Upon the very *threshold* of the Scripture record then — at the very dawn of history — we find proof from prophecy of the existence of an omniscient God.

Passing, now, over all intervening events to the deluge, 1500 years after the creation, we find five predictions of a character so remarkable that we must notice them. The *first* is the *prediction of the flood itself*, which, according to the authority of the best chronologists, did not take place till 120 years after it was foretold. The *second* is the prediction, after the flood, *that never again should the world be destroyed with water*; which fact, of course, could be known alone to an omniscient Being. The *third*, *fourth*, and *fifth*, are the predictions *relating to the three sons of Noah; Shem, Ham and Japheth*, and their descendants, which are recorded in the ninth chapter of Genesis, and are of so marked a character that they have arrested the attention of all thoughtful readers of the sacred volume. This prediction is given us by Moses, in the following language: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." A special malediction is here pronounced upon the

descendants of Ham, for his sin, and it is declared that they should be "servants of servants," that is, a vile, degraded, servile and enslaved people, upon the earth. That this should be the general character of the descendants of this son of Noah, is most distinctly affirmed. Not that certain branches of the families descending from him, or certain individuals of those families, might not be greatly blessed, nor that *all* of his descendants should be, at *all times*, under the curse; but that *in the main*, and as a *general rule*, the peoples descending from Ham were to be a low, base, and servile class, and that from them were to be taken, in the future, the "hewers of wood and the drawers of water" to their more favored brethren.*

* Bishop Newton, in his learned exposition of the prophecies, instead of the reading, "Cursed be Canaan," of the received version, suggests, as the true reading, "Cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan;" and after supporting this reading with several considerations, and by reference to other authorities, makes the following remarks: "By this reading, all the three sons of Noah are included in the prophecy; whereas, otherwise, Ham, who was the offender, is excluded, or is only punished in one of his children. Ham is characterized as *the father of Canaan*, particularly, for the greater encouragement of the Israelites, who were going to invade the land of Canaan: and when it is said, 'Cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren;' it is implied that his whole race was devoted to servitude, but particularly the Canaanites." Not that this was to take effect immediately, but was to be fulfilled in process of time, when they should forfeit their liberties by their wickedness. Ham at first subdued some of the posterity of Shem, as Canaan sometimes conquered Japheth; the Carthaginians, who were originally Canaanites, did, particularly in Spain and Italy; but in time they were to be subdued, and to become servants to Shem and Japheth; and the change of their fortune from good to bad would render the curse still more visible. Egypt was *the land of Ham*, as it is often called in Scripture, and for many years it was a great and flourishing kingdom; but it was subdued by the Persians, who descended from Shem, and afterwards by the Grecians, who

Behold now this prediction and its fulfillment! From Ham have descended such peoples as the early inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, and the present inhabitants of Egypt and Africa. The Hivites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Gergashites, Arkites, and all the peoples known in general as the Canaanites, afterwards driven out of Palestine by the Israelites, were among the descendants of this son of Noah. If, then, we look at profane history, we shall perceive a most remarkable fulfillment of this early prediction — for nothing is more true, or susceptible of a clearer demonstration from the history of the world, than that the descendants of Ham have been the most servile of all the inhabitants of the earth.

But a special blessing is pronounced upon *Shem*: “*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,*” or “Blessed of the Lord God be Shem.” And how has this prediction been fulfilled in his descendants! From him have come such nations as the Persians and Assyrians, the Lydians, and generally the inhabitants of Middle Asia. Probably also the *modern Hindoos* are his descendants, and *certainly* the Jews. As we read in sacred and profane history the records of the nations descended from Shem, we will see that none

descended from Japheth; and from that time to this it hath constantly been in subjection to some or other of the posterity of Shem or Japheth. The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the children of Ham; and for how many ages have the better parts of that country lain under the dominion of the Romans, and then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks! in what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, misery, live most of the inhabitants! And of the poor negroes, how many hundreds every year are sold and bought like beasts in the market, and are conveyed from one quarter of the world, to do the work of beasts in another!

but God could have foreknown that they would be so blessed.

It is, however, in Japheth that we see the most striking fulfillment of these early predictions. The special promise to Japheth is that he shall be enlarged: "*God shall enlarge Japheth;*" and most strikingly has this prophecy been fulfilled. From Japheth have descended all those peoples who settled northern Asia; thence, stretching out westwardly, they filled, in process of time, the whole of Europe. The entire continent of America is now occupied by them, and the process of *enlargement* is still going forward. Where will not the enterprise of the Anglo-Saxons lead them? Who but God could have foreseen all this, and announced it by the mouth of Noah forty-three hundred years ago? And in regard to these predictions there can be no mistake. There is no obscurity about them. They are as clear and as plain as it is possible to make them in so few words. *Ham is cursed*, and the special form in which the curse is to come is that of *servitude*. We *know* who have descended from this son of Noah, and we *know* that during all the ages, and now, this curse rests upon them. If a historian, utterly unacquainted with this ancient prophecy, were to write the history of the nations known to have descended from Ham, his record of them would be but a commentary upon this prediction.

Shem was blessed. We know likewise what peoples have descended from this son of Noah; and we *know* that their condition has been in the main infinitely

superior to that of the descendants of Ham. There is in this no conjecture. It is as certain as any thing can be made by the teachings of history. To Shem it was promised that Canaan should be his servant. This was the special blessing to him, as the servitude was the special curse to Ham. Nothing is clearer than that this, too, has been fulfilled. While occasionally, and as an exception, some nation, tribe or people, descended from Ham, attained temporary dominion over a portion of the children of Shem, yet *in the main, during all the ages*, the descendants of Ham have been the bondmen of earth. Without asserting the right or wrong of slavery, this has been a fact so patent to the world that it can not be denied.

"God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." What can be more clear than the fulfillment of this promise? Has not Japheth been enlarged? and now, after this prediction has stood for forty-three hundred years, behold that wonderful people, the Anglo-Saxons, stretching, with their language and their Christian civilization, over the entire earth, promising to bring under their authority the whole habitable globe.

Who, we ask again, could have foreknown and foretold the different destinies of these three sons of Noah? Behold these predictions upon record! Who recorded them? *Is there not a God?*

We must, however, press on to glance at other predictions fully as remarkable as those already

noticed. In the last words of the patriarch Jacob to his sons (Genesis, 49th chapter), we have twelve distinct predictions, some of which were not fulfilled until the patriarch had been in his grave over two thousand years.

Of these predictions there is one requiring special notice. It is the prophecy concerning Judah, recorded in the 10th verse of this 49th chapter of Genesis : "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The Hebrew word here translated "*scepter*," means also *a rod*, which was an emblem of tribeship. "Shiloh" means *one sent*, and all the most judicious commentators, both ancient and modern, both Jews and Christians, have understood by this designation, *the Messiah*, of whose coming into the world in the fullness of time, the Old Testament makes such frequent mention. This, then, is a most remarkable prediction concerning the coming of Christ ; and the declaration is, that the rod of office, and the officer or judge by which Judah shall be known as a distinct tribe in Israel, shall not depart until Christ shall come, unto whom there shall be a remarkable gathering of the people. In other words, Judah should exist as a distinct tribe until the coming of Christ. And most wonderfully was this prophecy fulfilled. Amid all the convulsions, the revolutions, the wars, the captivities, to which the twelve tribes were subjected, *Judah never lost her identity*. Though ten of the twelve tribes were carried away into captivity,

in which they became so intermixed as to lose their tribeship, Judah was preserved, in the providence of God, from such a fate. And this continued until forty years after the death of Christ upon the cross at Jerusalem. Then, in the Roman conquest, the scepter departed; then Judah lost her identity; and from that day to this, no distinction exists between them and other Jews. Who, but a God of infinite prescience, could have foreknown this? Who could have foretold it, but he who is from everlasting to everlasting, and who knows the end from the beginning? Surely, there *is* a God, and the existence of such predictions declare it.

In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses foretold, minutely, the present unhappy condition of the Israelites. Who but God could have told him that this peculiar people should have continued upon the earth for so many ages? Who could have foreseen that they would have been scattered throughout all the nations of the earth, and yet have remained, amid all, a distinct people? Who could have foreknown their persecutions, their sufferings, their trials, their judgments, for so many centuries? We need not ask. Read the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and compare the minute prophecies there recorded with the past history and present condition of the Jews — and then doubt, if you can, the divine existence.

Passing over scores of interesting predictions, we invite your attention to some of a most remarkable character, recorded by Isaiah. This prophet fore-

tells the birth of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian prince and conqueror, nearly two hundred years before he is born, and calls him by name. His parents were heathen, and of course knew nothing of the fact that this prophecy was on record. But to these heathen parents, thus ignorant of the purposes of Jehovah, a child is born. They call him Cyrus—just the name which Isaiah had already, by divine direction, placed upon record. The prophet informs us of his exploits—especially his successful invasion of the Babylonian empire, his overthrow of that mighty kingdom, the taking and sacking of the capital city, the release of the Jews, and their return, by his order, to their own land. And all this is predicted with a minuteness of detail which is truly remarkable. Hear the language of inspiration: “Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb: *I am* the Lord that maketh *all things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise *men* backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be

laid." "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel; for Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel, mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know, from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me; I *am* the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these *things*." (Isaiah xliv., 24, 28; xlv., 1, 7.) Says the distinguished Bishop Newton, in explanation of this prophecy: "Cyrus, who was the conqueror of Babylon, and transferred the empire from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, was particularly foretold, by name (Is. xliv., 28; xlv., 1), above a hundred years before he was born. He is honored with the appellation of the 'Lord's anointed,' and the Lord is said to 'have holden his right hand,' and to have 'girded him,' (Is. xlv., 1, 5), and he was raised up to be an instrument of Providence for great purposes, and was certainly a person of very extraordinary endowments — though

we should allow that Xenophon had a little exceeded the truth, and had drawn his portrait beyond the reality. It was promised that he should be a great conqueror, should 'subdue nations before him,' (Is. xlv., 1), 'and I will loose the loin of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut;' and he subdued several kings, and took several cities — particularly Sardis and Babylon; and extended his conquests over all Asia, from the river Indus to the Ægean Sea. It was promised that he should find great spoil and treasure among the conquered nations; (Is. xiv., 3), 'I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.' And the riches which Cyrus found in his conquests, amounted to a prodigious value in Pliny's account; nor can we wonder at it, for those parts of Asia, at that time, abounded in wealth and luxury. Babylon had been heaping up treasures for many years; and the riches of Cræsus, King of Lydia, whom Cyrus conquered and took prisoner, are, in a manner, become proverbial."

Isaiah also foretells the overthrow of Syria, the degradation of Egypt — which was at this time one of the most flourishing nations on earth, the destruction of the populous city of Tyre, the judgments to come upon Jerusalem, the coming, character, sufferings, and death of Christ, and the future day of millennial glory which is to dawn upon the earth. The writings of Jeremiah, Zechariah, Amos, Joel, Habakkuk, Jonah and Malachi, are also full of prophecies; but the book of Daniel is perhaps more

remarkable, even, than all the rest. This prophet predicts the downfall of the dynasties of the early world — the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Macedonian. He foretells the rise of the Roman kingdom and its characteristics, the full establishment of the Christian church by Christ, and its influence and power upon the earth. He foretells the rise of the *Papacy*, and with a minuteness which can alone be of God, he details the peculiar workings of that most remarkable anti-Christian power. Read the book of Daniel, in the light of history, and doubt, if you can, the Divine existence. So particular and so wonderful are the prophecies of Daniel, that infidel writers have affirmed — of course without a particle of proof — that they must have been written after the events referred to had transpired.

But it is not in the Old Testament alone that we find these remarkable predictions. The New Testament abounds with them. The birth both of John the Baptist and the Messiah, the rise of the Papal power, and the destruction of Jerusalem are all minutely foretold. Christ foretold his own cruel death and his resurrection from the grave, while Paul describes so minutely the peculiarities of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, in its “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,” that the likeness has been always and without difficulty recognized. And then, as is well known, the larger portion of the book of Revelation is a mass of predictions touching the Papacy, Mohamedanism, Paganism and the true religion, covering, in its grand

and comprehensive sweep, all the leading events of both church and state to the end of time — being, indeed, a summary of the earth's future. John, in the Isle of Patmos, was permitted to see by the eye of prophetic vision, the grand summing up of the world's drama, and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, recorded the closing scenes of earthly history.

Viewed indeed as a whole, from the beginning to the end, there is nothing more remarkable, more striking, in Scripture, than its hundreds of predictions. On the supposition of God's existence, and *only* on this supposition, can we account for them. These prophecies exist. We can not be deceived in regard to them. There they are, and we ask, *How came they there? Will the infidel, the atheist, answer?*

And now, in conclusion, there are two predictions of Scripture to which the reader's attention is particularly called.

The first is in those words so full of hope to a world lying in wickedness: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This may be viewed as a prophetic promise or covenant. The author of it is that God who has placed upon record all the predictions to which we have now referred. The fulfillment of this promise rests with the same glorious One who has so often and so signally verified all the predictions of his Word. Not more faithfully has he ratified his covenant with Noah, with Abraham, and with David, than with every one who, in the past, has accepted of the Lord Jesus Christ. Could the windows of heaven be opened

this hour, and could we look in upon the happy millions there striking their golden harps, and waving their palms of victory, we should then have a glorious confirmation of God's willingness and power to remember and to ratify, in Christ, the covenant made with every believing soul. Reader, remember that he who has promised to save every soul which trusts in Jesus, is the same Almighty God who, for six thousand years, has, in times and ways numerous and striking, demonstrated his absolute faithfulness and truth. Will you, then, not trust Him?

But, in the second place, let it be considered that he who has said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," hath also said, "*He that believeth not, shall be damned.*" Ponder these terrible words—terrible, because recorded by One who changes not. And yet these words, true as they are, have terrors only to those resolved to live and die out of Christ. Are you, reader, of this number? Is your mind made up? Have you concluded to rest quietly as you are? to make no effort to secure an interest in the righteousness of Christ? Then, in the last quoted words, your doom is written: "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Jehovah hath spoken, and he will not retract: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God."

CHAPTER VI.

“To common sense, great nature’s course proclaims
A Deity: when mankind falls asleep,
A *miracle* is sent, as an alarm,
To wake the world, and prove Him o’er again,
By *recent* argument, but not more strong.” YOUNG.

“Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.”—JOHN ii., 23.

WE presented, in the last chapter, the argument for the divine existence, as drawn from the prophecies recorded in Scripture. We saw that these were numerous — very clear, specific and minute; that there could be no doubt as to their being what they purport to be — predictions of events which were future when the predictions were uttered; and being such, the conclusion is irresistible — that there is an omniscient God, who alone could know and reveal what, in the very nature of the case, must be hidden from the mind of man. This argument is one, the force of which even a child can comprehend. God only *can know*, with certainty, future events. The Bible, however, is full of prophecies, many of which

are even *now* in process of fulfillment. *There must, then, be a God who placed them upon record.*

In this chapter, the reader is invited to the consideration of an argument fully as conclusive, when rightly viewed, as the one from prophecy. It is the *argument from miracles*, which may be stated thus :

Certain things have been done, during the progress of the ages, a record of which we have in Scripture, which are out of the ordinary course of nature. These are called Miracles ; and, being acts manifestly above the power and ability of man, there must be an Omnipotent Being who could alone perform them. Under the head of *Miracles*, we class all such acts as the creation of all things from nothing ; the instantaneous changing of water into blood or wine ; the parting of the waves of a sea or a river, so that, rising in a wall upon either hand, men have been enabled to pass through, as upon dry ground ; the dropping of manna from heaven ; the bringing of streams of water from the side of a rock, by the blow of a rod ; the fierce burning of a bush, yet its remaining unconsumed ; the causing of iron to rise at command from the bottom of a stream, and float like cork upon the surface of the water ; the overthrow of the most substantial walls built for the defence of a wealthy and powerful city, by simple blasts blown upon rams' horns ; the checking of the earth in its diurnal revolution, so that the day is prolonged, without any derangement in the economy of nature ; the preservation of life, when men have been cast into a furnace of fire, heated to a seven-fold intensity ;

the destruction of one hundred and sixty-five thousand warriors in one night, without visible means of death, to preserve a righteous nation from devastation; the feeding of thousands, again and again, with food which, at the first, would not suffice for five hungry laborers, and yet there being a surplus left, sufficient for the wants of hundreds; the instantaneous healing of the sick and the leprous; the opening of the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf; the unloosing of the tongues of the dumb, and the restoration to perfect health of the halt, the paralytic, and the withered; the casting out of devils, and the raising of the dead to full life and vigor; and all done *instantaneously*, without the use of ordinary means and agencies, by a simple *touch*, or *look*, or *word*—these are the things which we call miraculous, and which, having been done at different times during the progress of the ages, *prove the being of a God*.

Now, there is only one point to be determined in this whole matter, only one question to be answered: *Have miracles been performed?* or, rather, *has* there ever been a thing done on earth which is truly miraculous?—for one true miracle would as really prove the being of a God, as ten thousand; for the power adequate to one such deed, is adequate to any number. You will perceive, then, that we have before us *a simple question of fact*. Have miracles ever been wrought? How do we know it? Have we evidence sufficient to satisfy us of the fact?

Of course, intelligent infidels, perceiving readily

the effect of admitting the *fact of miracles*, have done every thing in their power to make it appear that *they* are impossible. Mr. Hume framed a celebrated argument, which skeptics, the world over, regarded at the time as unanswerable. We give this argument, in his own words: "A miracle," says Mr. Hume, "supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision than of argument. No testimony of any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability." "We establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make a just foundation for any system of religion." "Our belief or assurance of any fact from the report of eye-witnesses, is derived from no other principle than experience; that is, our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. Now, if the fact attested partake of the marvelous — if it is such as has seldom fallen under our own observation — here is a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes. Further, if the fact affirmed by the witness, instead of being only marvelous, is really miraculous — if, besides, the testimony, considered apart and in itself, amounts to an entire proof — in that case, there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail. A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from

experience can possibly be imagined. And if so, it is an undeniable consequence that it can not be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony. A miracle, therefore, however attested, can never be rendered credible, even in the lowest degree."

Now, this argument, stripped of its verbiage and laid bare, is simply this: "*Firm and unalterable experience*" *proves the uniformity of the working of nature's laws. Experience also proves the fallibility of human testimony.* Now, to believe in the violation of the laws of nature — which experience shows to be immutable, because certain persons testify to it — is to rely upon a fallible witness, whose testimony can not be received against the unbroken experience of the ages. This argument, though plausible, is deceptive and false. Hume assumes the point in debate in the first premise. We deny that "firm and unalterable experience" proves that nothing can occur except in conformity to the laws of nature. We claim that the experience of patriarchs and prophets and apostles — the experience of thousands in the early ages of the world, as well as in the days of Christ — *proves just the contrary.* And, then, there is a *sophism* in the second statement of the celebrated infidel. He says that universal experience has proved *the fallibility of human testimony.* True; and yet, notwithstanding this, mankind depend, in their most solemn interests, in their most weighty concerns, upon the testimony of their fellow men, *even when their own experience does not confirm that testimony.* We believe and act upon the information

of competent and respectable travelers, though we know nothing personally of the scenes which they describe, and the events they narrate. We never doubt the statements of such men as Bayard Taylor, Dr. Kane, Dr. Livingstone, and Captain Speke — though we never saw what they describe, nor experienced what they depict. It is a sophism, then, for Hume to argue against the possibility of miracles, on the general ground of the admitted fallibility of human testimony; for when properly authenticated, or when coming from a highly respectable source, men have always, and *must* always, rely upon it.

But there is still another fallacy in this argument of Hume. It is in the statement that a “miracle is a *violation* of the laws of nature.” How did Mr. Hume know this? He did not know it; nor is it true. The lawgiver may *suspend* the operation of a law for a time — he may *arrest* it temporarily — without in the least *violating* it. Miracles are things done under a temporary *arrest*, if you please, or *suspension* of the usual operations of nature; but are not *violations* of any law. What law of nature was *violated* when Christ opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, or healed the paralytic? What law was *violated* when manna was sent into the camp of Israel, to feed the starving hosts; or when water was brought from the rock, to quench their thirst? That these things were out of the *ordinary course*, is cheerfully admitted; but that in the production of any such results, any law was *violated*, we most positively deny.

And this is an argument of which the framer boasted, that "with the wise and learned, it would be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and consequently would be useful as long as the world endures." Vain boast! The utter sophistry and ill-concealed fallacy of the whole argument, subjects it to the contempt of every honest mind. It is scarcely credible that Hume himself could be deceived by it.

The question, then, returns upon us: Have we sufficient evidence that miracles have been wrought? May we believe that events out of the ordinary course of nature have occurred, as claimed in the unimpeached records of Scripture?

Let us consider, in answering these questions, a few specific cases:

I. Take the parting of the waters of the Red Sea, the account of which we have by Moses, who was the leader of the Israelites at the time. Now, whether we shall believe what Moses here tells us, will depend on several considerations: 1. So far as we can judge by all the other writings of this man, is he a truthful person — one we can believe? 2. What were his opportunities of knowing that which he affirms? 3. Had he any motive in deceiving the world by a false narration? 4. Did Moses make a record of this event, and proclaim it *while there were those living who might have denied it, if it were not true?* 5. Was it ever denied by any one competent to refute it? Remember the circumstances attending the performance of this miracle.

It was not done in a corner. Not less than *three million persons, young, middle-aged, and old*, saw it. Moses, who records it, *tells them and their children* of it, *again and again*, in after years. Moses had enemies, yet no one ever arose, among all that host, to say, "You have recorded what is false." How *can* this be accounted for, except on the ground that a notable miracle was there wrought, and that Moses tells the truth when he records it?

II. Then take the *bringing* of water from the rock in the desert, when that mighty host was perishing of thirst. In the presence of thousands who were murmuring against him, who were all but ready to tear him in pieces, Moses stands up and smites a bare and flinty rock; and, upon the blow, there flows forth a stream which slacks their thirst for forty years. This event Moses records. He writes an account of it in the sacred scrolls of the nation. The statement is read annually, in their midst. It is related year by year, and generation by generation. The people who are told that they witnessed these things, continue to follow Moses, respect his authority, and obey his commands. Now, how can all this be accounted for, unless that miracle was indeed wrought? If water had not been brought from that rock by the rod of Moses, would there not have appeared *some one* truthful enough to say so? Would that whole host have bowed thus implicitly to a gross imposition? To believe this, is to believe in what is more difficult to account for than a miracle itself.

III. Then, too, consider the case of Joshua when he commanded the sun to stand still. This event was witnessed by thousands. It was done upon the day of a notable battle. Time was thus afforded the Israelites to overcome their enemies. Now, if Joshua had asserted what was never done, is it not incredible that not one of those thousands ever arose to deny it? The miracle was related; an account of it was incorporated with their sacred records. Nay, more; it was made use of to bind those Jews to a system of religious observances which was altogether irksome to them. Joshua, and others who came after him, were continually saying to these Jews, "Obey these laws, submit to these rules and regulations, though irksome to you; for the God of heaven, who appeared to stay the setting of the sun, has imposed them upon you." Now, if this miracle had not been performed, how soon would it have been denied? But it never was. During all their generations, it was believed; and, to this day, no true Israelite is found bold enough and bad enough to deny it.

The same remarks apply to all the miracles of the New Testament, as well. The *character* of the men who record them; the manifest *truthfulness* of the other writings by the same persons; the fact that there were, in nearly all, *scores*, and in some cases *hundreds* and *thousands*, who witnessed them, and yet that *none* ever denied the fact, though oftentimes the strongest motives impelled them so to do; all these considerations compel us to believe that

these events have taken place according to the Scriptures. Take the case of Christ raising Lazarus from the grave. This was done in the presence of many Jews who were bitterly opposed to him, and ready to seize upon every thing that could be construed into a ground of complaint. That Lazarus was dead and buried they knew. That the evangelists placed upon record the statement that Jesus raised him to life in the presence of many Jews, they also knew. Why, then, did *no one* ever arise to deny the assertion? Gladly would they have done so if they could; but they could not. The *fact* of the miracles, *even the enemies* of Jesus were compelled to admit; and they were obliged to resort to the poor, mean, base, and *wicked* subterfuge of alleging that he performed them *through power* derived from Satan.

And then, moreover, the credibility of the testimony touching miracles will appear in a still clearer light when we recall the fact that there is a total absence of all evidence that the persons through whom these wondrous works were wrought availed themselves of any *influence thereby acquired to promote any selfish end or purpose*. Had they been impostors, and had their miracles been only tricks of jugglery or legerdemain, there would have been evidence some where that the persons working these wonders made use of the influence they thus acquired to promote their own power, and advance their own consequence. But there is not one particle of testimony upon this point. That the people in whose presence these works were wrought, did believe that

they witnessed miracles, must be admitted. Now, under those circumstances what would impostors have done? Why, they would at once have turned to their own account the credulity of the people. They would have built upon this foundation a superstructure of self-aggrandizement and power. They would have drawn wealth from the duped crowds around them. They would soon have been found dwelling in palaces, with scores of menials attending upon them, and all the glory and pomp of a regal court surrounding them. Poets would have been hired to sing their praises, and historians to relate their wondrous deeds in all the fulsome terms of oriental adulation. Moses and Joshua, like Achilles and Cyrus, would have had their Homer and Xenophon; and Peter and John, like Æneas and Augustus, would have had their Virgil and their Horace.

But instead of this, what do we behold? A constant denial on the part of all these persons, that they wrought these works of their own power; a continual reference to God as the only one to whom honor and glory are due; a refusal to take any gifts, to receive any emoluments, to arrogate to themselves any superiority on account of any thing which God has wrought through them. When they might have aspired to wealth and fame, they voluntarily prefer poverty and obscurity. They live in the humblest circumstances, and cheerfully adopt lives of the greatest austerity. If they were impostors, how can this be accounted for? Would unsanctified human nature have acted thus? Granting that these

works were only successful tricks — yet certainly the people were imposed upon. How would not bad men have availed themselves of the influence acquired by their legerdemain to advance their worldly and selfish interests? If Moses only deceived the people in all the wonders he wrought in Egypt and the wilderness; if Joshua only misled them by some fortunate display of jugglery when the sun seemed to stay itself in the heavens; if Jesus mocked the lame, the blind, the sick, the leprous and the deaf, and only made them *believe* that they were healed when he knew they were not; if Peter and John only tricked the people into a belief that what they wrought were indeed veritable miracles; still, even infidels must admit that the people were truly *deceived*, and that these persons who wrought these wonders did thus acquire for a time a tremendous influence over them. Why, then, was this influence *never* employed for selfish ends, or to subserve the private purposes of these wonder-workers? Can infidelity answer this question? It can not; it never has, and it never can. The truth is, that human nature is always the same. There are wonder-workers now; but do they refuse all emolument? Are they willing to live in poverty when they can have wealth? Do they choose privations when they can have luxury? We know they do not. They work their wonders only that they may acquire competence; and if the thing does not *pay* — and pay *well* — they soon abandon it, and take to more lucrative pursuits. Why did not those through whom the miracles of Scripture

were wrought do likewise? The only answer is, that they were not impostors; that there is a God who wrought through them, and whose grace prevented them from falling under the dominion of these groveling purposes.

The force of these considerations is yet further greatly enhanced by the fact *that in working these miracles, the agents often exposed themselves to persecutions and to death.* Now, if they were impostors, would they have gone forward as they did, when they had the certainty before them of the severest trials, and even in some cases of death itself? It is granted, that for influence, for power, for fame, for wealth, for luxury, men will brave almost any danger. But we have already seen that none of these things were motives actuating the persons working the miracles of Scripture. Yet they went forward. Though doomed to poverty, though expecting no reward of an earthly nature, though seeking no influence, no honors, no applause, they went forward manifestly led and guided by an impulse which is above them, which they neither can nor care to resist; they went forward, though, to all human appearance, it is to their ruin. Take, as an illustration, the case of Elijah: This servant of the Lord lived in the days of the ungodly Ahab, and the diabolical Jezebel. See him proclaiming that for three years and six months there should be no rain in the land, except by his word. What a mark did he make of himself by this announcement, and especially how did he stand exposed, when in exact accordance with his declara-

tion, the heavens became as brass, and the whole land mourned under the miraculous scourge? What motive could have induced him thus to draw down upon himself the whole force of the godless government? So, too, when at the close of those eventful years, we behold the prophet on the top of Carmel, mocking the priests of Baal, as recorded in the 18th chapter of 1st Kings, and when all their vain devices had failed, bringing fire from heaven in answer to his call, and then turning, in all the majesty of a divinely-commissioned agent, upon the idolatrous devotees of the idol god, and commanding four hundred of them to be put to death in the presence of the deluded monarch, how can his conduct be accounted for upon the ground that he was an impostor, and seeking by his tricks to deceive the people? Is it not evident that he was under the guidance of an Almighty power, and that he was but seeking to show to an unbelieving generation, that there is indeed a God with whom are the issues of life and death? Surely, no impartial reader can carefully study the record of these miracles, wrought in the face of such dangers, without being convinced that the agents who wrought them were under the control of a Divine power.

Our position, then, in regard to this whole matter, is simply this: The testimony of the sacred writers is, beyond question, credible. When they write of other matters, they are believed. Their testimony has never been impeached. Even those who had the strongest motives to do so — their enemies and the

enemies of the religion they promulgated — did *never* deny the fact of miracles. In the absence of all testimony to the contrary, then, the argument may be regarded as conclusive. Miracles have been wrought; a Being of infinite power alone can perform such works; and that Being is God.

But the question is sometimes asked, "Why are not miracles wrought in our day?" With the same propriety, we might inquire, "Why does not the work of creation go on now, as at the first?" and "Why does not God make written revelations of his will, now, as formerly?" "Why does he not commission prophets now, as of old?" The truth is, *miracles* belong to the *founding period* of religion. They were necessary, in laying the corner-stones of Christianity, to convince a stupid, dark and benighted world, of the existence of a supreme power, and of the divinity of religion. But they are not necessary now. We have *the experience* of the world for eighteen hundred years. We have seen what religion can do, and what it is doing. The world is no longer in its infancy. It has now the finished canon of Scripture. It has before it, the continued *working* of Christianity. It has the presence and power of the Holy Ghost; and, as Abraham said to Dives, "if it believe not, then neither will it be convinced, though one rose from the dead." The truth is, there is no force in this inquiry. If we refuse to believe that miracles have ever been wrought because they are not continued to our day, we might, with equal propriety, refuse to believe that Columbus discovered

America, because no new continents are now unfolded to the astonished gaze of man.

And now the argument for the Divine existence is complete, and, as we view it, most conclusive. It has been strengthened with proofs drawn *from the phenomena of the material world; from the powers and capabilities of the human soul; from the evidence of a moral government, as found in the history of our race: from the existence of the Bible; from the character of the contents of that wonderful book; from the clear and undeniable prophecies which it contains, and from the miracles which it records.* What truth was ever placed upon a broader, firmer basis than this?

And now, in concluding these chapters upon the Divine existence, one solemn truth forces itself upon us. *Into the immediate presence of this wonderful Being — this dread and incomprehensible Jehovah — we shall soon, very soon, be ushered. As yet, we see him not.* True, we know that he is. We can reason upon the subject, and draw our conclusions; but in a little while we shall be called before his throne, to answer for our lives. Are we prepared for that solemn audience? Have we made our peace with him? Can we lie down upon our beds at night, feeling safe — being assured that if our eyes are opened *only* in eternity, that they will be opened upon the scenes of bliss and eternal joy, found at the right hand of God? Reader, what solemn questions are these! And yet, perhaps you will close these pages, leaving these questions still unanswered. And yet, why

should you? Behold, God proclaims a *full*, a *free*, a *present* salvation, for every one who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Oh, how the heart bounds in recalling this glorious promise, and how *your's* *should respond*, in hearing it! Yes, a *full*, a *free*, a *present* pardon, for *every one* who will believe! Will you believe? Will you accept? Will you live? May God help you, by his Holy Spirit; and to His name, through eternal ages, be all the praise.

“BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED.”

CHAPTER VII.

“ Whence but from heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?” DRYDEN.

“*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” — 2 TIM. iii., 16.

HAVING, in preceding chapters, set forth arguments by which the fact of the Divine Existence can be demonstrated, we come now to consider certain questions which lie at the very foundation of all our *further* investigations: *Has this God, whose existence we have demonstrated, communicated his will to man? and if so, in what form has he done it, and where shall we look for this communication?*

There is a book which claims to contain a record of the will of God. It is called the Bible, or “The Book;” sometimes also denominated “the *Scriptures*,” or “the *Writings*,” by way of eminence. The writers of this “Bible,” or “the Scriptures,” claim that what they have written is indeed the *very Word of God*, and contains all that God would have his intelligent creatures know of himself, his counsels,

his purposes and plans. In other words, they claim, in the language of Paul to Timothy, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and *that it is*, in consequence, an infallible guide to man in all the matters of which it treats.

It must be evident to every intelligent reader, that what is here claimed is of the utmost importance. If we have in the Bible an inspired record of the whole will of God, then this book becomes the *umpire*, or the authority of last resort, in all matters which appertain to our relations to God, both for this world and the next. How important, then, that we should give earnest heed to the settlement of this question, that we may have, for ourselves, an intelligent faith in this book, and that we may also be able to give others a reason of the hope that is in us.

Two inquiries meet us at the threshold of our investigations :

I. *What is inspiration?* And,

II. *How may we demonstrate the inspiration of the book known as the Bible?*

1. Then what is inspiration? When Paul says to Timothy, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," what does he mean? The word here translated "*inspiration*," is "*theopneustos*," "God in-breathed," or "inbreathed of God;" as though the Apostle had said, "All Scripture came from God just as breath comes from a person *breathing* it forth, and was communicated to those who recorded it just as breath might be thrown into their lungs

from the lungs of another." The whole idea here seems to be that of an *outflowing* from God of this Word, and an *inflowing* of the same into the minds of those who were to record it for the instruction of mankind. Like every thing else which God does, there is no doubt something of mystery as to the *manner* of this inspiration, while the *fact* of it can not be denied. Now, if the Bible has thus come forth from God, you can perceive with what propriety it is called *the Word of God*, and how true it is, that, like God himself, it must be *the truth, all-sufficient and infallible*, in all matters of which it treats. When it is said that at the first God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul, we understand that Adam must have been like God in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. So the Scriptures, if indeed thus outbreathed from God, must be like God. They are, and of necessity *must be*, a perfect, infallible, and absolute guide, in all the matters of which they treat.

Lest, however, this definition of inspiration should be regarded as too general, let us descend somewhat into particulars, and illustrate what we mean by a reference to specific cases. As a fair example, take the case of Moses. When God was about to communicate his will through this servant, what took place? Why, as we suppose, God, by his spirit, so moved upon the mind of Moses, took such possession of his mental faculties and moral powers, that he was incited to write just what God wished him to write, nothing more, nothing less; and all that is written

under this moving, inciting, controlling influence, is said to be inspired, or given by inspiration. Of course, what Moses conceived and wrote under these circumstances, must have been just what God willed *should* be conceived and written. It is therefore God's will, his word, and must be like God himself — *pure, holy, perfect, and infallible*. And so of all the sacred writers. While being used by God for the purpose of recording his will, they were fully under Divine influence. They recorded only what God directed. By this was secured infallible truth in all their writings — both in the ideas they express, and in the manner of expression; both in the thoughts and in the words. This, as we understand it, is inspiration.

Now, if this definition of inspiration be correct, we shall have no difficulty in understanding the signification in which the word *revelation* is employed, when used to designate the whole Word of God. We speak of the Bible as “*a revelation*,” but of course we are not to understand by this that it contains only what the writers could not have known without *direct communication from heaven*. Much of historical truth, many incidents and events found in the sacred volume, could not be strictly termed *revelations*. They are of such a nature that the sacred writers could, and, it is evident, did know them without the interference of the Holy Spirit. Much also afterward recorded, had no doubt existed in the form of traditions floating among the people. In the New Testament times, it is evident that Mat-

thew, Luke and Paul, and the other sacred writers, are called upon to record much which could not in any proper sense be termed revelations—such as what fell under their own observation of what Christ did, and what they actually heard of his teachings—and yet it is evident that all their records are *given by inspiration*. The Holy Spirit *directs* the writers just *what* incidents, historical events, and circumstances, to relate; and also so moves upon their minds while they make the record that they are guarded from the possibility of error.

Inspiration, then, it will be seen, is not synonymous with *revelation*. While all Scripture is given by direct *inspiration*, all is not *directly revealed*.

In the language, then, of one* who has written more fully upon this point than it would suit our present purpose to do, we claim “that the Scriptures come to us directly from God, as a revelation of Spiritual truth which we have no other means of knowing; that to this end, the Spirit of God, resting upon, dwelling in, possessing and influencing the individuals chosen for the purpose, made them the medium through which to furnish this Divine communication; that these men were thus inspired, and that in their inspiration, they were not only preserved from error in their statements, but were also made infallible teachers of the truth. What the Apostle Peter said of the Ancient Scriptures, we may now say of the entire canon, ‘The prophecy came not, in old

* Rev. J. A. Smith, D.D., “The Spirit in the Word,” page 122.

time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' ”

And now,

II. *How do we demonstrate the inspiration of the Bible? How do we prove that these writings are in this sense from God?* Let it then be considered,

1. *That there is nothing impossible or improbable, in the claim of inspiration.*

That there is a God, we have already seen. Now what hinders this glorious Being from communicating his will to his creatures? What is there to prevent his moving upon the minds of such persons as he may select, to lead them to write his commands, his statutes and precepts, for the instruction and guidance of the world? It is a fact which will not be denied, that the mind of man is as fully under the control of God, as any thing else in the universe. He made it, knows all its capabilities and powers, its secret springs, the motives which control it, and the desires and passions by which it is swayed; and no reason can be assigned why he should not move upon it, and lead it to just such conclusions as he may elect. We know that oftentimes one *human* mind exerts a powerful influence upon *another* — leading it to give up old ideas and adopt new ones. We know that the wicked may and do acquire an almost unbounded influence over others, by the strength of their mental powers, and that the righteous *may be*, and *are*, the means of untold good, by virtue of the impressions made by their renovated faculties upon other minds. If, then, one *human* and *finite* mind can thus influ-

ence and guide another, impressing its own ideas and thoughts and feelings upon it, who will say that the *infinite* mind—that of God, the *creator of all minds*—can not control and govern the intellects of men, causing them to indite for the good of the world, just what he wills?

Nay; so far is this from being either impossible or improbable, it is highly probable that God has, just in this way, and no other, given his will to earth. He might have employed angels to make a record for man, of the truths which He desired to reveal. But reason tells us that, in a matter of so much interest, it is important that *God* should come into contact with *man*—the *human* be brought into contact with the *divine*. And this is done in inspiration. The Holy Spirit—the Third Person in the Trinity—takes possession of the faculties of the soul, makes his presence and power known, and uses man—who is, most of all, interested in the result—to record the will of his Maker. There being no more difficulty in God's moving upon the human mind than upon the angelic, it appears, even to *reason*, highly probable that he would communicate directly with those for whose benefit the communications were made. And this, in inspiration, is all we claim. It is the *infinite* using the *finite* mind, to impart his will for the enlightenment and salvation of the world. Is it not highly *probable* that this has been done? But,

2. *The writers of Scripture claim inspiration for the contents of the sacred volume.* Perhaps some may object that the writers themselves are not to be

admitted as witnesses in this matter. A moment's consideration will show you, however, that this objection is not well taken. We saw, in our last chapter, that the writers of the Scriptures were *good and reliable witnesses in all questions of fact of which they speak*. Their testimony has never been impeached. So far as we can judge, they are truthful men. That they are men possessing the frailties of humanity, we readily admit; but we claim for them also a large share of the *virtues* of humanity. Were Moses or Isaiah or Daniel or Paul or Peter or John called upon any witness-stand on earth, their testimony upon all questions of fact would be received *as readily*, to say the least, as that of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, or Clay. When, then, these writers say that they write and speak not of themselves, but as they are guided and instructed by a Divine power within them, we presume they know what they say to be true.

If the writers of Scripture were *good men*, they never could have claimed, in this matter, what is false; and if they had been *bad men*, they would have taken all the *glory* of writing the Scriptures, to themselves. Why, to have written such a book as Isaiah, or the Proverbs, or the Book of Psalms, or the Epistle to the Romans, or *any other portion* of the Bible, would have been an honor so great that no *wicked* man would have failed to have claimed it. If Lord Byron, or Hume, or Bolingbroke, or Chesterfield, had written a poem as sublime as Miriam's song of victory, or the 68th Psalm — or if either had

composed a prayer as heartfelt and touching and true to nature as Solomon's at the dedication of the temple, or Daniel's in the captivity of Babylon, or that crowning summary of human wants, called "the Lord's Prayer,"—or if either of them had written an oration as full of true eloquence as Paul's magnificent defence before King Agrippa—think you that he *would have given the credit of it to another?* No, no; far from it. If a bad man had written thus, he would have claimed the whole honor to himself. But the writers of the Scriptures could not have been bad men. The things written here could never have emanated from the mind of a depraved impostor. The writers *must* have been *good* men; and if so, they never could have claimed inspiration, unless it had been true. Their testimony, then, is to be received. It is valuable and reliable on this question of fact. But,

3. *The nature of the contents of Scripture furnish proofs of their inspiration absolutely overwhelming.* In descending to particulars under this division of the subject, it is difficult to know to what first to direct the reader's attention. If we look,

1. At the Scriptures as a whole, considering them in their *perfection*, their *glory*, their beauty, their majesty, every dispassionate mind must conclude that a higher power than that of man must have been concerned in their production. If this is not true, then surely we can be shown a book some where of acknowledged human origin which can rival the Scriptures in the characteristics above

named. But where is there such a book? Take the works most highly prized among men; those which, by the judgment of the world, are entitled to the regard of the ages; those which, by reason of their intrinsic excellence, men will not let die; and how far short of the Scriptures do they fall in their majesty, their beauty, their perfection! Bring to the comparison the poems of Homer and Hesiod, the oldest poetical productions extant; take the histories of Xenophon and Herodotus, the philosophical writings of Plato and Socrates, or the works of the best and wisest of the ancients, and how do they all pale into insignificance before this wonderful book? Or, if it is desired, bring to the test the prized productions of modern minds; the carefully penned disquisitions of Bacon, or the plays of Shakspeare; the boasted creations of Milton and of Bunyan, or the elaborate treatises of Butler and of Edwards, and how mean, how contemptible do they appear when contrasted with the sublime utterances of the Word of God? If there is any doubt upon this point, let a chapter from Butler be first read, and then a chapter from Paul; a page from Milton, and a page from Isaiah; a play from Shakspeare, and the sermon on the Mount; a section from Bacon, and the Revelation of St. John, and the dullest mind can readily perceive the world-wide difference. The one is manifestly superhuman, above and beyond the power of man; the other, a mere creation of human learning and genius. The one is seen to be of heaven, the other of the earth. However great, and beautiful, and

grand, the one may be, it is seen and felt to be but a greatness, beauty, and grandeur, to which man is competent, while the sublimity, the perfection, the glory of the other, is absolutely unapproachable. Ask the greatest genius on earth to write a code of laws like the Ten Commandments, or a sermon like that of Christ's upon the Mount, or a prayer like the Lord's Prayer, or a treatise on the eternal world, as pathetic and sublime as the closing chapters of the Apocalypse, and he would throw down his pen, after an impartial trial, pronouncing the feat impossible. The production of no painter, however skilled, ever equaled the brilliancy of a natural sunset, because the glories of the evening sky were spread by a *Divine* hand; so no writings of man ever equaled the Bible, as all its utterances were given by inspiration of God. Then,

2. *If we consider what the contents of this book have accomplished in the direction of man's civilization*, we will discover another argument that they were given by inspiration. Wherever the Bible has gone, wherever its contents have been read, and allowed to exert their legitimate influence upon the minds and hearts of men, there has come to earth her highest civilization. Look at Scotland, England and America, and contrast their condition with that of heathen and pagan lands. What makes the difference? The Chinese have the writings of Confucius, the Hindoos have their Shasters, the Mohammedans have their Koran, but why have they not our civilization? The answer is, that *they have not the book*

of God. The Creator of man is alone the source of true light to the nations ; and where the Bible goes, there alone goes true civilization.

This remark is rendered still more striking when we consider, that just in proportion as the truths of Scripture are perverted, or obscured, or mixed with traditions, just in that proportion will civilization suffer. Italy, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and Mexico, are illustrations of this fact. Bible truth in those lands means not an *entire*, but an *emasculated* revelation. They have but a portion of the Scriptures, and just that portion which the Papal church chooses to grant them. The teachings of the Bible are here mixed with the teachings of men. What now is the result ? Plainly, a cramped, circumscribed, emasculated civilization. In France the Scriptures are more free, for there the Papal priests have less power ; and yet even in France, the civilization is not of that broad, that better type, which characterizes her neighbor across the channel. Indeed, so obvious is this fact the world over, that a graduated measure of national attainments in civilization might be made upon the simple knowledge of the degree to which each people possesses and uses the Bible. Let a scale be formed like a thermometer, and those nations and kingdoms with no knowledge of Scripture might be seen to range at zero, and on a gradually rising scale, would be found the more favored people, just in the proportion of their Scripture light.

Why is this ? Have any other writings on earth

such power? Did the productions of man ever thus affect the world's destiny? If not, have we not here the evidence that a book having such an influence, has an origin higher than earth? Certainly, the unprejudiced, it would seem, must admit that writings capable of effecting such radical changes in the structure of society, must have been given by inspiration of God. A *Divine* power alone could impart to doctrines and teachings such superhuman efficiency.

3. *If we examine the prophecies so thickly strewn throughout the sacred volume, we must conclude that the writers of the Bible were inspired.* To many of the predictions of Scripture, reference has been made, in a former chapter, as proving the *being of God*; and no lengthened consideration of them is now deemed necessary. It is only important to show that the Bible contains undeniable prophecies, which have found their accomplishment in every age, and which are *now* fulfilling, in the history of nations and individuals, to satisfy every intelligent person that the writers of those prophecies must have been inspired. They *could not, of themselves*, have known the things which they foretold. Look, for instance, at the prophecy concerning *Ishmael and his descendants*. This was one of the sons of Abraham, and it was predicted that he should be a "*wild man*," — or, as it is in the Hebrew, a man like a wild ass in disposition — "that his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him;" and yet that he should "dwell in the presence of all his

brethren." These prophecies are found in the 16th and 21st chapters of Genesis, and are remarkably specific. When Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, had been driven from her home by the severity of her mistress, it is said that the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, and said to her, "*I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.*" How unlikely this result, under the circumstances! A *servant*, driven from the face of her mistress—a *despised outcast*—to be the mother of a great people! Would any mere man have *ventured* such a prophecy as this? But the angel says, further, "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name *Ishmael*, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.*" Look, now, at all the circumstances of this case, and see how unlikely it is that any mere man would have ventured upon such predictions as these. Here is the promise of a *great people*, from a despised outcast, an Egyptian slave. This great nation was to descend from one who was to be a *wild man*, turbulent and warlike, who was to be involved in continual strife, "*whose hand was to be against every man, and every man's hand against him.*" Yet he was to dwell in the presence of all his brethren. They should neither be able to *subdue* him, nor *banish* him from their sight. Would any one, *on his own responsibility*, and having any regard for his reputation, venture such

strange conjectures as these, touching the future of any human being, or class of beings? Upon the very face of it, then, this prophecy bears the impress of a superhuman origin. Let us see how it was fulfilled.

The Arabs and wild Bedouins of the Desert of Arabia, are, as we know, the descendants of Ishmael. And what has been their history? What to-day is their character? Does not this prophecy, uttered thirty-five hundred years ago, describe them exactly? Other nations and other peoples *change* with time. The example of surrounding nations is sure to affect, more or less, the manners, the habits and the character of successive generations. But the Arab changes not. He remains the same turbulent, untamable, fearless marauder, which prophecy declared he would be, even before Ishmael was born. *To-day*, we have in the Bedouin robber, flying from place to place upon his well-trained steed, with "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him," a standing demonstration before the eyes of all, that Scripture is inspired.

Then again, look at the prophecies concerning Babylon and Tyre—the London and Paris of the ancient world. Of Babylon, it is said that she shall be *utterly* destroyed. Hear Isaiah: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there;

but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces." What a vivid description is this of an utter overthrow! And, as is well known, this is fully verified in the present condition of that once magnificent city. Travelers inform us that the ruin is most complete. The supposed site is covered with pools of stagnant water, and every thing is in perfect keeping with the terrible description of the prophet.

A *different* fate, however, was predicted for the city of Tyre. She was not to be *utterly* destroyed, but was to be reduced very low; indeed, so low that she would be, during future ages, only an obscure village, where fishermen should congregate, and whose nets should be spread upon the rocks which formed her foundations. Now, who but God could have foreseen the different destinies of these two cities, and have thus revealed them to the writers of the Bible? The true site of Babylon has for ages been in doubt; the *probable* site presents the appearance I have described; while to-day, the once proud and opulent Tyre is but a cluster of fishermen's hovels by the sea. And this is only a specimen of the thousands of predictions on record in the Scriptures. We *can not*, therefore, doubt their having come from God, and that the writings which contain them *must be* inspired.

4. *Then, again, the wonderful acquaintance with*

human nature displayed in the Scriptures demonstrates their inspiration. None but God knows to perfection the human heart, and none but he can make such a record of its most secret workings as we find in the pages of the Bible. Infidels have often acknowledged this peculiarity of the Sacred Word, and have resorted to the Scriptures as the great text-book of human nature. This was the case with Lord Byron. He was a constant reader of the Bible—not for its religion, not for its morality, not for its doctrines, but largely for its wondrous unfolding of the springs of human actions. So with Shakspeare. This great dramatist, *it is well known*, is the poet of the human heart. He was probably more thoroughly acquainted with human nature than any other uninspired writer. *And yet* it is an undisputed fact that Shakspeare was a constant reader of the Scriptures. From that, as from a fountain, he drew the knowledge which he knew so well how to use. We ask, then, where did these writers of Scripture, these shepherds, and fishermen, and herdsmen, get this *perfect* knowledge of human nature? *It is perfect.* They never make a mistake when writing of man. They never speak as though in doubt. All is *positive* knowledge with them. Whence did they receive it? *Will infidels answer?*

5. But still again; the inspiration of the Scriptures is proven *by their applicability to every person, to every class, and to every condition in life, and also to every age of the world.* The Bible never grows obsolete. The world does not outgrow it. It keeps pace

with the progress of science, and is as *new* and fresh to-day as when the earth was in its infancy. The young in every age and land find it the book for them; the middle-aged and the old regard it as their richest treasure. The ignorant and the unlearned find wisdom and light in its pages, while the wisest and the most cultivated of earth bow in reverence before its sublime teachings. When Daniel Webster was dying, he found no consolation except in the pages of Scripture; and he had read to him, again and again, the comforting passages of the 23rd Psalm. Was there no other book to which the dying statesman could appeal? The whole field of human literature lay open before him. The treasures of science, of poetry, of philosophy, could be impressed into his service. The resources of his own great mind, the deductions of his own towering intellect, it might be thought, would have availed him in the hour of his trial. But no; from all these he turned, and with the dependence and faith of a little child, sought in the inspired utterances of the Shepherd King, support and comfort in the dying hour.

When Sir Walter Scott was on his death-bed, he said to his son-in-law, "Lockhart, read to me." "From what book, sir?" "Lockhart," said the great poet and novelist, and throwing into his voice and manner unusual solemnity, "*Lockhart, there is but one book!*" No, no; *there is but one book*, and simply because there is *but one which is inspired*, God has but one book on earth, and that is the Bible.

Reader, is this wonderful book dear to you? Con-

sider that, like Webster and Scott, you, too, must die. Sooner or later, the silver cord of life will be loosed, and the golden bowl broken at the cistern. You have but a frail hold upon existence. Are you ready for your change? It is only in the Scriptures that you can obtain light for the dark future; only here you can learn what God would have you do in order to eternal salvation. Search the Scriptures. Let them be to you as a lamp to the feet. You are treading a dark and dangerous pathway. Take them as the man of your counsel, and they will not fail to guide you to Christ, and through him to eternal felicity.

“There wilt thou learn what, to thy ardent mind,
Will make this world but a thorny pass
To regions of delight; man's natural life,
With all its varied turmoil of ambition,
But as the training of a wayward child
To manly excellence; yea, death itself
But as the painful birth of life unending.”

CHAPTER VIII.

"O, vain philosophy! Thou wandering light,
Which hast so oft misled our steps, attend!
And prostrate at this heavenly shrine, lament
Thy blindness, and forego thy pride: here cast
Thy trophies down, undeck thyself of all
Thy borrowed plumes, and own the fountain whence
Thy hoary sons received the living fire
Which animates the glowing page they penned."—HODSON.

"Thy word is truth."—JOHN xvii. 17.

HAVING, in the last chapter, considered two questions: namely, "*What is inspiration?*" and "*How do we prove the inspiration of the Bible?*" we come now to answer the very important inquiry, "*How do we know that the separate books which compose the Scriptures are those which have been given by inspiration of God?*" In other words, "What assurance have we that the Bible, *as at present constituted*, is the Word of God?"

This question is by no means an unimportant one, inasmuch as there are writings which the Papal church admits into the sacred canon, which the Protestant church rejects as not of Divine authority. How, then, can we *distinguish* between the *false* and

the *true*; between the books which indeed *are*, and those which *claim* to be, the inspired Scriptures?

In answering this question, let us consider,

1. *The Old Testament Scriptures.* This portion of the sacred volume is composed of thirty-nine books, written by a number of persons during a period of between eleven hundred and twelve hundred years. Now, are these thirty-nine books the ones *precisely* which God gave by inspiration to the world, and in which he embodied his will to the Jewish people?

To answer this question, let us consider,

1. *That it is incredible to suppose that God would give by inspiration such writings as the Bible contains, and yet not provide for their transmission to future ages, in such form that their authenticity could not be reasonably questioned.*

Let what we have said in the last chapter, touching the *inspiration* of the sacred volume, be here considered, and the force of this remark will readily be seen. God, by his Holy Spirit, secured the *writing* of the Scriptures. They were not written for the early ages, or the first generations of men. They were evidently designed, as they were adapted, to be a light to all ages, even to the end of time. Now, is it not incredible, that a book thus given by Divine interposition, and for such a purpose, should be left to take care of itself; to survive or perish; to remain pure or to be corrupted; to be entirely lost, or to so lose its identity in coming years that those for whom it was intended would be in doubt as to

its being indeed the Book of God? Surely, we must conclude that the same Divine power which *produced* the Scriptures, would *preserve* them, and *transmit* them to future generations, with such testimonials of their genuineness, that there could not be a *reasonable question* as to their being the very Word of God.

This consideration is still further strengthened by the fact that the moment the Scriptures are seen to be open to a reasonable doubt, that moment they cease to be of any practical benefit. If we have just grounds to say of any part of the Old or New Testament, that we seriously doubt its being from God, we of course lose confidence in it, and can not receive it as an *infallible* guide. God, who gave the Scriptures by inspiration, saw and knew this, and hence he could not be indifferent to the matter of handing these writings down to coming ages in such form that they should have authority as indeed of God. And if he could not be indifferent to a matter so vital, he could and did provide against it. So far as the probabilities of the case are concerned, the whole argument may be summed up in a word. God certainly never would have given the Scriptures by solemn inspiration, and then leave it a matter of doubt whether the peoples for whom they were intended could satisfy themselves that the books coming to them were the very Word of God. To conclude otherwise, would be an impeachment of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. As further confirming this view, we notice,

2. *That the peculiar circumstances under which the sacred books were written would naturally secure for them the highest respect, and this respect would lead to their being guarded with great care, and transmitted in purity to succeeding generations.*

To illustrate this remark, take the five books of Moses. This person was selected by God to be the deliverer of Israel from Egyptian bondage, in the performance of which duty he wrought, through the power of God, many striking miracles in the presence of the Israelites, thus attesting his *Divine* commission. During the journey through the wilderness he held the wonderful interview with the Most High upon Mount Sinai, in the presence of the hosts of Israel, during which the Decalogue was given to him, written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone. Now, when Moses wrote out the five books to which his name is affixed, and gave them to the Israelites, with the injunction that they should be *sacredly preserved*, as containing the Word of God, you will not fail to perceive that they would *receive them* as a *most sacred deposit* — as a *treasure* to be guarded with the *utmost vigilance*. They would naturally say, “We have *seen how* God has been with Moses, our leader, the writer of these books. We are the *witnesses* of the mighty works wrought through him. We know that God *has guided him*, and *spoken to him*, and *through him*, and now we must guard these God-given writings as we value our happiness, and the happiness of our children.” Thus the Lord, by demonstrating in the presence of those

who were to be the keepers of the sacred records, the Divine commission of the writers of Scripture, secured, in a great measure, their watchful guardianship over their high trust. Just as if one should now be able to convince the people that he was commissioned to bring a certain message from heaven, it could not be otherwise than that his message would be kept in most sacred remembrance, and be transmitted to future generations with fidelity and scrupulous regard. This would be the natural result.

And then, what was true of *Moses*, is true of all the *other* Old Testament writers — Joshua, Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the whole of the *lesser prophets*, as they are called. These were all known to be men of high and saintly character; known to be men of God; and as their writings were completed and given to successive generations of Jews, they were added to the sacred records with the reverence due such august productions, and transmitted with the utmost care. Now this is all very natural. Respect for *the writers* begat respect for *their writings*; and when to this was added the firm conviction that what was written was indeed of God, we can perceive how the Scriptures of the Old Testament should descend from generation to generation, just as God had given them to their authors. But, -

3. We are not left to mere conjecture upon this point. It is a matter well attested in history, *that the Jews, from the days of Moses, exercised uncom-*

mon vigilance to guard the purity of their sacred books, and allow no corruption of the sacred text.

We read in Deuteronomy, xxxi. 25, 26, that when Moses had finished the first five books of Scripture, he "commanded the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book of the *law*, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." And from this sacred resting-place it was brought out, from time to time, to be read and to be *copied* for the guidance and instruction of the people. Josephus tells us that every tribe had a copy, and we may safely presume that *soon* hundreds of copies were made by the priests and Levites, who found in this book the laws and rites prescribed for their daily religious services. We know, too, that their kings and rulers had copies, for it was expressly commanded, that when they should have a king, "He should write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests and Levites." The reader will not fail to notice how difficult, under these circumstances, it would be to *add to*, or *take from*, or *alter* in any way, these sacred books. The priests and Levites, the kings and judges, and all the people, high and low, were concerned in them, *and each class* would be a *check* on the other, even if any were disposed to alter the sacred records.

And what was true of the books of Moses, was also true of all the subsequent books, as they were added from time to time. The *whole* nation knew

of them. Ezra, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and all the writers down to Malachi, were men of character, of note, of a national reputation. They were understood to write under the inspiration of the Almighty. What they wrote was designed for the whole people. Copies of their works were therefore at once made and read, and in many instances largely committed to memory. Every man and woman in Israel; yea, even the children knew what and how many sacred books they had, and were conversant with their contents; and *no* man, without the marks and characteristics of a true prophet, could be credited, or secure for his writings admission into the sacred canon.

Equally difficult would it be for *mistakes* to occur in *copying* these books. It is stated by some Jewish writers, that not only every chapter, but *every word* of the sacred record, *was counted by the scribes*; and not only every word, but *every letter*, so that those copies of the Scriptures which fell short *one word*, or *one letter*, *even*, were pronounced defective, and either at once corrected, or thrown aside, never to be used. Such was the care, such the *extreme caution*, exercised by the Jews in guarding the oracles of God. Those who question whether the books of Scripture, as we now have them, are indeed the same as those originally given, can not know the jealous care evinced in their preservation. But,

4. *Among all the accusations brought by Christ against the Jews in his day, we never find him charging them with having corrupted the sacred books.*

He does accuse them of multiplying traditions of their own; of forsaking the Scriptures that they might follow those traditions; but he no where even *hints* that they had been faithless to their trust, or careless in the great matter of preserving the sacred records pure and entire. This is very valuable testimony. These books, thus preserved by the Jews, Christ himself used and endorsed. He quoted from them again and again. He read from them in the synagogues. He says that he came to fulfill them. He commends them, and enjoins upon his hearers the duty of reading them. "Search the Scriptures," says he, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "The Scriptures" which Christ here commands his hearers to "search," are just the books of the Old Testament which we now have. Would he thus have spoken of them, if they were not the very Word of God? If they had been corrupted or changed during the ages, would he then have said, "they testify of me?" Would he have encouraged his hearers to "*search*" writings not of God, on the ground that in them they conceived, and conceived truly, that they had "eternal life?" Nay, certainly, there could not be "eternal life" for any soul in books not inspired.

But again, as is well known, Christ speaks of these Scriptures as an infallible and unchangeable rule of life, and declares that they will not fail in one jot or tittle until all be fulfilled. His language is, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or

the prophets ; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven ; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew v. 17, 18, 19.) Our Saviour here, according to well attested Hebrew custom, speaks of the larger portion of the Old Testament under the term, "the law and the prophets ;" and he affirms of these Scriptures what could not be true *unless they had been the pure Word of God*. He declares that they are infallible, and that their every utterance shall be fulfilled. He condemns the man who shall break the least command recorded in them, and teach others to do the same ; and commends him who observes those commands, and leads others to their observance. But could he have done this, had not the Scriptures been indeed the Word of God ?

Attention might also be called, in this connection, to those words of the Saviour, in which he says to his disciples : " These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me." Here Christ cites the whole of the Old Testament as received by the Jews in his day. They made just this division of it — into the law, the

Prophets, and the Psalms. The whole was *the Book, the Scriptures, or the Truth*, and was just what has been transmitted to us under the title of the Old Testament. Only one other declaration of Christ will be considered in this connection. In his memorable and touching prayer, recorded in the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, he uses this language: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Our Saviour here, without doubt alludes to the truth of God as then received and recognized by his followers, and which was embodied in their sacred writings. But if those works had been corrupted, could he have consistently asked the Father to use the truths which they contained as instruments of the sanctification of his followers? Certainly not. Such a request, touching the sacred writings, clearly implies that they had come down to Christ's day well authenticated; and this language of the Saviour endorses them fully as of God. In short, every allusion of Christ to the Scriptures, every quotation he makes from their pages, every utterance concerning them from his lips, but proves that in *his* days they were fully recognized as "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." This, then, is well nigh conclusive, as we have the very same books in our hands this day, which were then approved by the immaculate Son of God.

But the same thing is true of the inspired Apostles. Though they brought many accusations against the Jewish nation, *unfaithfulness in regard*

to the sacred text was not one of them. Though the writings of Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, are full of warnings, admonitions and reproofs, yet they never, in a *single* instance, command the Jews to repent of the sin of *altering*, or in any way *changing* the sacred text. They accuse them of *not obeying* the Scriptures, of *disregarding* them, and *misinterpreting* them, but they are enabled *always* to appeal to them as indeed the very Word of God, unmutilated and unchanged. Indeed the chief advantage which the Apostles, in all their controversies, had over their Jewish antagonists, was their ability to *quote against them their own* Scriptures, as being the very Word of God. By turning to Peter's address upon the day of Pentecost, we will find an example in point. When some ascribed the remarkable effects witnessed on that occasion to the drunkenness of the disciples, Peter stood up and said nay, "but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;" and then he quoted, almost word for word, the utterances of their own Scriptures against them. Nor will the tact and skill of Paul, in using this weapon, be forgotten. With what power does he wield it in his epistle to the Romans, when arguing against those who, in the Jewish nation, were going about to establish their own righteousness, "being ignorant of the righteousness of God!" How often do we find him saying, "as it is written," "as God said to our fathers," "as he said also in Hosea," "as David saith," etc. And then, in the epistle to the Hebrews, with what skill and adroitness does he argue throughout upon the

declarations of God in the Old Testament! The first verse of the first chapter shows the course he is to pursue: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers," etc.; and then, with a more than human tact and power, he quotes passage after passage from their own Scriptures, proving that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah. And these are but a specimen of the course pursued by all the sacred penmen in the apostolic day. They quote largely the declarations of the Scriptures, just as they then existed, in favor of the truths of Christianity, and against the rejectors of Christ. How could this have been done if the Scriptures had not then been pure? if they had not been just as given by inspiration of God? The force of this position will be appreciated by every intelligent reader.

5. *If, now, it should be alleged that after the days of Christ the Old Testament Scriptures may have been corrupted by ignorant or designing men, it should not be forgotten, that from Christ to the present time, there have been two great parties, each possessing the Old Testament Scriptures, each claiming them as inspired, and each watching over them with a solicitude vigilant and constant, lest there should be the least alteration or mutilation of the sacred text.*

The Jews, from the days of Christ, have continued to hold the Old Testament Scriptures; and the Christians have received them also upon Christ's authority, as the very Word of God. And these two parties, both believing and holding the same books,

have been, from that day to this, a check and restraint upon each other. When one portion of the Christian church added, about the beginning of the fifth century, the books known as the Apocrypha, it was in the face of the fact that these books were never recognized as inspired by the Jews ; were not written in Hebrew, like the other sacred books ; and were never quoted or sanctioned in any way by our Saviour and his Apostles. So far, then, as the testimony of Christ and his Apostles is concerned, and so far as the subsequent testimony, both of Jews and Christians goes, we know that what we now call the Old Testament *is indeed the very Book of God*. But,

6. We have still another witness to introduce. *The catalogues, which from time to time along the ages were made of the sacred books, show that we have the true Bible in our hands to-day.*

It is a fact well attested in the history of the Church, that for generations the Jews divided their Scriptures into *three* parts, called "*the Law*," "*the Prophets*," and the "*Hagiographa*," or "*holy writings*," or "*Psalms*." This is the division, as we have already seen, which our Saviour makes in the 24th chapter of Luke, when he says that "all things must be fulfilled which are written in the *Law* of Moses, and in the *Prophets*, and in the *Psalms*, concerning me." It was well known that by the *Law*, the Jews designated the five books of Moses ; by the *Prophets*, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets, Job, Ezra, Esther, and Chronicles ;

and by the "Psalms," the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and the book of Psalms.

In numbering the sacred books, however, the Jews counted as one the two books of Samuel; also the two of Kings, and the two of Chronicles. They also included under one head Ruth and Judges; also Ezra and Nehemiah; and also embraced in one, Jeremiah's prophecies and his Lamentations; thus making, of what we count as twelve books, but six. They also summed up the twelve minor prophets into one book; so that instead of thirty-nine, as we count them, they made but twenty-two. The object of this was to make the number of the sacred books accord with the number of letters in the Jewish alphabet, probably that by association they might aid the memory.

This, as we find, is the exact number given by Josephus, whose intelligence as a witness concerning the Canon, can not be questioned. He says:

"We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting each other, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all past times, which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain the laws and traditions of the origin of mankind until his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses until the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the Prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their time in thirteen books.

The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of life."

A further testimony of this writer we have in the following words :

"How firmly we have given credit to these books of our nation is evident by what we do ; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them ; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately, and from their birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them."

Besides, a catalogue has been transmitted to us, which was made by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who traveled into Palestine for the express purpose of making the list of the sacred books under the most favorable circumstances. Then after Melito, we have one by Origen — the most learned and best qualified for such a purpose of all the fathers. After him, we have catalogues by Athanasius, by Cyril, by Augustine, by Jerome, by Rufin, by the council of Laodicea, and by the council of Carthage. And when it is considered that all these catalogues accord with our Old Testament Scriptures, giving us just the books we have, leaving out the Apocrypha, which the Jews *never* received, and which our Saviour never sanctioned nor recognized, you will see that the argument, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, is conclusive. There needs no further proof concerning those ancient books.

Deferring the consideration of the New Testament Canon for the next chapter, we close with one single practical suggestion.

In the care with which God has transmitted these sacred records to us, we behold a signal evidence of their transcendent value. Would God have manifested all this solicitude for writings that were worthless? Can we conceive it possible for the Infinite Jehovah to guard, by his providence, and cause to descend to us, a book which, after all, is valueless, or comparatively so? Suppose that it be admitted, as most are ready to do, that the Bible is in some respects an admirable work; that it is entertaining and instructive; that it contains much valuable history, and genuine poetry, and high-toned morality; yet would all this account for the wonderful fact of its preservation and transmission? We think not. That which amid all the convulsions and the overturnings of society, and despite all the opposition with which it has had to contend, has yet survived to the present day, must contain something more than a mere code of morals. We know that it is more than this. It is a depository of knowledge touching God, and our relations to him; touching such great problems as sin, and guilt, and pardon; touching problems which were never solved, and which never could be solved until the contents of this book became known. Hence the providence displayed in its preservation, and the solicitude of the pious that it should neither be corrupted nor lost.

And then, in the light of this wonderful preservation of these Old Testament Scriptures, from age to age, and from generation to generation, how culpable the conduct of those who in *our* day undervalue these ancient writings? It is not uncommon to hear the Old Testament spoken of as something *obsolete, effete, and without authority*. Invidious comparisons are drawn between it and the New Testament. What madness? Has God authorized such a distinction? Did Christ, by word or deed, sanction such an unfavorable judgment? Did the inspired Apostles entertain such an unworthy estimate of the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and the holy men of old, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? No; far from it. The *whole* Bible is the Word of God. It comes to us clothed with Divine authority, and must be received as the message of the Most High to a perishing race.

“ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT.”

CHAPTER IX.

“Sad error this, to take
The light of nature, rather than the light
Of Revelation, for a guide. As well
Prefer the borrowed light of earth’s pale moon,
To the effulgence of the noonday sun.” BATES.

“For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which
speaketh in you.”—MAT. x. 20.

HAVING considered, in the last chapter, some of the reasons why we receive the thirty-nine books of the *Old Testament* Scriptures as those which were given of God to constitute, in part, his revealed will to man, we now proceed to investigate that portion of the Sacred Canon known as the *New Testament*. It will be obvious to every intelligent reader, that if we can establish, without reasonable doubt, the fact that writings, as ancient as the *Old Testament* Scriptures, have come down to us uncorrupted and entire, then there will be far less difficulty in making this clear in the case of the *New Testament* Scriptures, which were written at a period so much nearer our own times. It is a much easier task to prove the authorship of a book written in the seventeenth, than in the

seventh century; much easier to demonstrate that Bishop Butler wrote the "Analogy," and that Milton wrote the "Paradise Lost," than to prove the authorship of the "Hexapla" of Origen, or the "Universal History" of Eusebius. There may be no question as to the genuineness and authenticity of the more ancient writings; the evidence in their favor may be ample; and yet the number and character of witnesses substantiating the more recent productions will be such that we can, with still greater ease, place them upon a foundation which precludes the possibility of a doubt.

This, as we proceed with this discussion, will be found to be the case with the New Testament Scriptures. The first of these books was written, according to the best chronologists, about A.D. 40, or 41, and the last, about A.D. 97; so that the whole time which elapsed between the writing of the first and last of the New Testament books, was not more than fifty-six or fifty-eight years. In this respect, as will be seen, the New Testament stands in a striking contrast with the Old, as no less than eleven or twelve hundred years elapsed between the writing of the first and the last books given under that dispensation.

The portion of the Sacred Canon which we are now to consider, consists of *twenty-seven* books, composed by *eight* different persons: namely, Matthew, *one*; Mark, *one*; Luke, *two*; John, *five*; Paul, *fourteen*; Peter, *two*; James, *one*; and Jude, *one*. Now, the question is, "Are these the very

books which were written by these persons under the Divine direction, for the use of the church in all ages? Have we the evidence that these separate writings were given to the church, and that they have descended to our day uncorrupted, and substantially as they were originally written?

In answering this question, let it be considered,

1. *That all these separate books were in circulation among the Christian churches while the reputed writers still lived; and yet they never disowned them, nor complained of an imposture.*

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude, were all men of note in the early days of the Christian church. All of them were with Christ, as his Apostles, except Mark, Luke, and Paul; and these were among the most distinguished of the disciples, and well known to the whole church. Many of them were endowed with miraculous powers, so that they were able to attest their Divine commission in a manner not to be mistaken. Several of them actually wrought miracles, and acquired a distinguished place in the regards not only of the church, but of the world. They were known to be men of God. They had left all to follow Christ. Some of them, like Matthew, who was taken from the receipt of custom; and Luke, who was a physician; and Paul, who was a young lawyer of great promise, abandoned high earthly prospects to follow Christ. Now, this being the character of these writers, is it not evident, that if the books which were put in circulation bearing their names, were not

written by them, they would at once have disclaimed the imposture? But this we do not find that they ever did. Matthew's Gospel was written long before his death, and became a text-book in the church, being read publicly upon the Sabbath, as an inspired book. Paul's epistles, except that to the Hebrews, were all published with his own name either at the beginning or end, and in some instances both at the beginning and end; and by a positive injunction, which was incorporated into the epistles themselves, most of them were read in all the churches. By turning to these epistles, it will be seen that they are usually introduced with the words, "Paul, an Apostle," or "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," and not unfrequently contain his name as the writer, either in the body of the epistles, or at their close. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians ii. 18, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again," etc. So in Philemon, besides introducing the epistle with his name, he says, in the 19th verse, "I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand." In 1 Thessalonians iii. 17, we have, "The salutation of Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write."

Now, the point is this: It is a fact well attested, that these writings were generally known and read in the life-time of the persons whose names they bear. We have the very strongest evidence that these persons were *good* men. If these books, bearing their names, were not written by them, is it not incredible that they should have allowed the imposture to go

unexposed? That they could have *connived* at such a trick, and allowed the whole Christian world to be *deceived*, we can not believe, and the only rational inference is, that the books bearing the names of these persons must have been written by them, even as they themselves declare, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. We have, then, the united assent of the writers themselves to the genuineness and authenticity of these New Testament writings which were circulated as theirs. The importance of this consideration in this discussion will be illustrated by citing a case similar in our own times :

In the year 1865, there was a discussion of Christian doctrine in the city of New York, by twelve of the prominent clergymen of that city, which was published and circulated, with the name of each clergyman affixed to that portion of the book of which he was the author. The publication took place in the same city where these gentlemen lived. The work was extensively circulated in their immediate vicinity. The people of their own churches bought and read it. Year after year rolled away, and the book was multiplied more and more, and circulated far and wide. Now suppose that one hundred, or five hundred years hereafter, some one should ask, "How is it known that this work *was* indeed written by these eminent divines?" would it not be a legitimate argument to say, "*It was published as theirs, under their own names, during their lifetime, circulated and read with their knowledge, and they never, by a word, indicated their disapproba-*

tion?" Certainly, this would be a good reason why all succeeding generations should regard these writings as really the productions of the persons whose names they bear.

This, then, is our first argument for the New Testament Canon: *These books, it is well known, were in circulation during the lifetime of the writers, and were never disowned by them.* There is no rational way in which this fact can be explained, except upon the ground that the books were written by the persons whose names they bear.

II. *We have the most undoubted evidence that from the very earliest period, after the Apostles, the New Testament was received by the Christian church just as we now have it.*

By this, we do not mean to be understood as saying that there were not, at times, certain persons, and sometimes writers of considerable note, who expressed doubts touching two or three of the books now found in the New Testament Canon; but our claim is, that *from the Apostles onward, the great mass of the Christian church, including the large majority of the learned and critical, maintained the genuineness and authenticity of the books which now form our New Testament Scriptures.* If this can be clearly shown, then we have a proof which can not be reasonably questioned, for it must be confessed that the *learned men* living nearest the Apostles, had the best means of judging of the genuineness of the books claiming inspiration. Let us now see what those persons say.

1. The first witness we shall introduce, is the distinguished Origen. This learned man was born in the year 185, less than one hundred years after the death of the Apostle John. His father was a martyr to the Christian faith, while his grand-father and great-grandfather were both distinguished Christians. "His great-grandfather lived within twelve years of the death of Mark," * and was for twenty years a cotemporary of the Apostle John. For more than one hundred years, the Origen family had lived the associates of the Apostles, and in constant intercourse with their immediate successors. Origen not only enjoyed the advantage of this lineal descent from parents so intimate with the Apostles and their cotemporaries, but we are informed that he labored with the utmost assiduity to acquire the most thorough acquaintance with all that affected the religion of Christ. He traveled extensively for this purpose, and visited the churches, far and near, founded by the Apostles. What better witness, then, can we have, than such a man. Highly learned, unusually observant, eminently pious, a distinguished teacher and writer, an indefatigable explorer after truth, equally illustrious as a historian and commentator, profound, subtile, and ingenious, where, considering all his advantages and attainments, could we find a better witness? This distinguished father, then, prepared a catalogue of the New Testament, in which he mentions the *four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, fourteen Epistles of Paul, two of Peter, three of*

* Dr. Seiss.

John, and the Book of Revelation. This enumeration includes all the present Canon except the Epistles of James and Jude ; but these were omitted by accident, not design ; for in other parts of his writings he acknowledges these Epistles as a part of the Canon. Here, then, is most clear, explicit and valuable testimony. It is incredible that Origen should not know which were the books received by the churches, and acknowledged by the Apostles as of Divine authority. And yet he gives in his catalogue all but two of those now in the New Testament, and these he quotes from elsewhere, thus giving them his sanction as a part of the Sacred Canon. But,

2. Our next witness is Eusebius, who, after Origen, is in some respects the most distinguished of all the early fathers. He lived and wrote about one hundred years after Origen, and had such opportunities of knowing whereof he affirmed, that his testimony is of the very highest character. He resided much at the court of Constantine, and enjoyed the confidence and esteem of that distinguished Emperor. He had free access to all the records of the Christian church. The libraries of Cesarea and Jerusalem were open to him ; all the archives of the state were submitted to his use. His learning was of the most solid kind ; his research the most extensive ; and he was held in such esteem, that he was chosen Bishop of Cesarea, in Syria, in the year 313, which high office he held until his death, which occurred twenty-five years afterward. He wrote a history of the church, covering that portion of her history from the birth of

Christ to the year 324. Who, then, could be more competent than this learned man, having free access to all the records and the libraries of his times, and exalted for his learning to the very highest office in the church, to inform us what books were received by the Christian church as genuine? And what is his testimony? *He assures us, in his history, that the church in his day received the very books of the New Testament which we now have, and no others.* He gives a catalogue, in which we have mentioned as genuine, *our present New Testament Canon.* It is true, he says, that *some* questioned the Epistle of James, the Second of Peter, and the Second and Third of John, and that the Revelation was rejected by some; but *Eusebius himself*, and the *body of the church* received those books as genuine. This is well nigh conclusive. With two such witnesses as ORIGEN and EUSEBIUS, we might almost regard the question touching the New Testament Canon as settled.

3. We have, however, other witnesses — indeed, a “*cloud*” of them — who testify to the same effect. *Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, who is described as “a man of great mind, noble heart, invincible courage, unaffected humility, and lofty eloquence,” living the cotemporary of Eusebius, has left upon record a catalogue of the sacred books, which agrees in every particular with our Scriptures.

Cyril, a learned father, residing at Jerusalem, in a catechetical work prepared by him, has transmitted a catalogue of the New Testament, agreeing in all respects with ours, except that he omits the Revela-

tion. In this, he is imitated by others, *not because that book was regarded as wanting in any proofs of genuineness, but because it was deemed so obscure and difficult of interpretation, that it ought not to be inserted among the books to be read by the common people.* Whenever, then, we find the Apocalypse omitted from any of these catalogues, this will be considered the reason.

Our next witness after Cyril, is the *Council of Laodicea*, composed of many distinguished bishops, assembled from all parts of the church, which met at Laodicea, A.D. 364, and published a catalogue of the New Testament, which corresponds with ours in *all respects*, except that the book of Revelation is omitted. The action of this Council is important, as showing that thus early there was found throughout Christendom, an all but universal agreement touching the Canon.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, a profound scholar, a few years after the council of Laodicea, published a work on heresies, in which he gives a list of the Sacred Books, which *in all respects* agrees with our present Scriptures. He deemed the reasons for the exclusion of the Revelation insufficient.

Gregory Nazianzen, another learned divine, and a poet, published about the same time a poem, in which he mentions all the books in our New Testament except the Revelation.

Philastrius, a few years later, *Bishop of Bixtria, Italy*, gives us a list, in a work published by him, which agrees *precisely* with our Scriptures, except

that he credits Saint Paul with but *thirteen* epistles. We know not whether this omission is accidental or intentional. If the latter, he probably omits the Epistle to the Hebrews, which *some* supposed not to have been written by Paul, as it does not *bear his name* like his other epistles, and as some have thought its style to differ from Paul's. These reasons, however, soon came to be regarded as insufficient, and this epistle was admitted by all as Canonical.

Jerome, another distinguished *father*, and a cotemporary of the last named, translated the whole Bible into the Latin language, and made a catalogue of the sacred books, which corresponds, *in all respects*, with our Scriptures.

Rufin, or *Rufinus*, a distinguished writer, and intimate friend of Jerome, has added his testimony in a catalogue, corresponding *precisely* to our New Testament Scriptures.

Augustine, after Origen and Eusebius, is the most distinguished writer whose opinion is here to be quoted. This illustrious man, *the Calvin of the ancient church*, was born A.D. 354. Being converted to the true faith, he employed his great talents in writing in favor of genuine religion, against the various errorists of his times. His works were voluminous, and it is safe to say, that no man in his age did more to defend the truth as it is in Jesus from the attacks both of avowed enemies, and pretended or mistaken friends. For his great learning, he was in due time chosen *Bishop of Hippo*, and fulfilled the duties of the office with distinguished

ability. When, then, this illustrious man gives us the very list of books now composing our New Testament Scriptures, as those received by the church in his day, we will perceive that we here have a most valuable testimony. And this he does. The books named by this distinguished writer as composing the Canon of the New Testament, are the twenty-seven which we now have.

The Council of Carthage, held in the latter part of the fourth century, consisting of *forty-four* bishops, distinguished for their learning, and of whom *Augustine* was one, gives us, in their catalogue, a list which agrees, in *all respects*, with our New Testament. This demonstrates the unanimity which at that time prevailed in the Christian church upon this vital question.

A writer, known in history as *Dionysius the Areopagite* — though there is reason to believe that this is an assumed name — who flourished about this time, also mentions the books of the New Testament in such a way, that we learn from him that the books as we now have them were received in his day as the New Testament Canon.

And now, can there be a reasonable doubt concerning this matter, in view of the wonderful concurrence of these numerous witnesses? Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Philastrius, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, the Council of Laodicea, and the Council of Carthage, with a wonderful unanimity, testify to the same point. If there is any

doubt touching the Hebrews, or the Revelation, or any other book, it is a doubt which is not at any time entertained by the *whole* church, or even by a *majority* in the church, but exists in the minds of a few, and is soon disposed of to the general satisfaction; so that by the close of the *fourth* century, at the Council of Carthage, *forty-four bishops*, being a very fair representation of the whole church, pronounce *unanimously* in favor of the books as we now have them. The Canon may, at that time, be said to have been settled; and from that day to this, Christendom has been contented.

Here, then, our argument might safely rest; but we have still another proof, greatly strengthening the evidence as now presented:

III. *It is a fact, that the early writers of eminence in the church, always quoted from these books as sacred, and that, too, notwithstanding the fact that they lived at great distances apart, and had no direct conferences with each other.*

When we find that all the fathers of eminence living in Europe, Asia and Africa, quote precisely the same books, refer in their writings to the same works which now compose our New Testament Scriptures, and refer to them as the sacred books which have come down to them from the Apostles, how are we to construe it? Is it reasonable to conclude that these men, scattered all over the civilized world, had conspired to impose upon their fellow-men in a matter of such solemnity? No, no; this is not reasonable. The only rational inference

is, that they had received a *common* treasure ; that they had the *common evidence* that it was from God ; and that, prizing it highly, they failed not to quote largely from the sacred pages to enrich their own productions.

The pertinence of this consideration may be illustrated by the supposition, that a question is raised in our day touching the genuineness of the plays of Shakspeare. If some one should demand the proof that all the plays now bearing the name of the great dramatist, were really written by him, we might appeal with confidence to the fact that writers who were cotemporary with him, and who lived in the age immediately succeeding him, had quoted from these plays as genuine ; that each of his tragedies and comedies had thus been recognized, and that no other dramatic writings had been so designated. This certainly would be very strong proof. In the case of the Sacred Scriptures, this point acquires additional significance from the fact that there *were other writings in circulation* bearing some resemblance to the books admitted to the Canon ; yet the fathers do not quote from these spurious books *as Canonical*. There were books written on religious themes, somewhat in the style of Scripture, and in some instances bearing the name of men who stood high in the Church's regard ; but these were not received by the early Christians, nor were they quoted by the fathers as being given by inspiration of God. These works were not named in the catalogues of those early days, nor were they appointed

to be read in churches *as having Divine authority*. Some of these spurious books have come down to us. We know not exactly when they were written, but in all probability not until after the death of all the Apostles ; and indeed, so palpable is the fact that they were not written by inspiration, that we do not wonder the church never received them. They resemble as little the inspired writings, as do the nursery rhymes of Mother Goose the sublime strains of Milton.

IV. Another evidence, however, of the genuineness of the New Testament Canon, is found *in the testimony of the enemies of Christianity during the early ages of the Church's history*.

Certain men were permitted by God to arise, and by their pens to oppose the Bible and the religion which it contains, for the end, as it would seem, that the world might know that what its friends say of that book is true. These infidels bear testimony to the very facts which we claim as the glory of Christianity ; and in charging upon the Christians of the early Church the peculiarities which we know to have distinguished them, they quote the Scriptures which were received by the Church, and thus add their testimony to the genuineness of the Sacred Volume. *Celsus*, who lived less than one hundred years after the Apostles, wrote against Christianity, quoting from the very New Testament books which have come down to us. Addressing himself to Christians, he says : "*These things, then, we have alleged to you out of your own writings.*" And in another place he

says: "*I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and those, too, different from what is written by the disciples of Jesus, but I purposely omit them.*" Here, he speaks of those sacred writings as though they were *well known and generally received* in his day, which was undoubtedly the case.

Porphyry, the leading infidel in the *third century*, wrote extensively against the Christian faith, and from the fragments of his writings which have descended to us, we find that he objects to many things contained in the Gospels. *He does not claim* that these books *were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*; he does not *deny* the genuineness of the writings, but raises against the truths they contain, just the *cavils* which have been repeated in such a variety of forms by his imitators in more modern days. Now, it is apparent that if these books had not been *received as Canonical* by the *whole Church* in the third century, *Porphyry would have disposed of them in a most summary method by exposing their spuriousness.* But this he *does not undertake.* He *admits* their genuineness by *attacking the truths* which they reveal.

But probably the most considerable opponent of the Christian faith in these early days was the *Emperor Julian*. He was born A.D. 331, was educated in the Christian faith, and at one time made a public profession of religion, but upon becoming Emperor, he renounced Christianity, re-established heathenism, and with his tongue, his pen, and his wealth, sought to destroy what he had once professed

to love. The writings of this distinguished person, who will descend to the remotest generations bearing the unenviable title of "*Julian the Apostate*," serve to demonstrate *that the New Testament, as we now have it, was received, read, and revered* by the Christian Church in his day. Julian refers to the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, of course to find fault with them. He alludes to the writings of Paul. He also mentions the conversion of Cornelius, and Sergius Paulus, and notices the letter sent by the Apostles to churches, convening the first general council; and also speaks of Peter's vision; all of which he found recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. He says that none but John ascribes to Christ the creation of the world; that "neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke nor Mark, has dared to call Jesus God;" that "John wrote later than the other evangelists, and at a time when a great number of men in the cities of Greece and Italy were converted." We have here a distinct reference, by Julian, to far the larger part of the New Testament Scriptures.

And let the reader consider *this* fact: That had these enemies of Christianity been able to say, "*these books were not written by the persons whose names they bear*," they surely would have adopted *this* as the most *effectual* means of disposing of the whole question. Instead of pausing to find fault with *this* or *that* in the Gospels, or the Acts, or the Epistles, they would have said, "*the whole is a base imposture*. Paul did not write the Epistles;

Luke did not write the Acts ; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, did not write the Gospels respectively ascribed to them. You Christians are deceived ; you are the victims of an egregious imposition." But this they *never* said. They *could* not. The proof of the genuineness of these books was so clear in this early day, that they *dared* not deny it. Porphyry undertook to show, indeed, that the Book of Daniel, in the Old Testament, could not have been written by the person whose name it bears ; but he *never* alleged any thing of *this* nature against the New Testament. If, then, these *early* infidel writers *dared* not attack the genuineness of the New Testament Canon, *is it not too late for this attempt to be made, after eighteen hundred years?* If *Celsus*, and *Porphyry*, and *Julian*, saw the hopelessness of an assault founded upon this point, may not modern infidelity learn a lesson, and be guided accordingly ?

V. There is, however, one other proof to which we wish to refer the reader in this connection. *It is this : All the early copies of the New Testament Scriptures contain the same books which we now have, and they are ascribed to the same writers.*

Copies of the New Testament were made at a very early day. Indeed, we have grounds to believe that as fast as churches were formed, a demand was created in each for one or more versions of the Word of God, and steps were taken at once to supply the demand. These versions began to appear as early as the latter part of the *first* century, or beginning of the *second*, and were multiplied as fast as the exigen-

cies of the growing Church demanded. Besides, as the Christian religion was not confined to one race — to persons speaking one language — there arose a necessity for copies of the Word of God in the *various* tongues then commonly spoken in the East. Hence, about the beginning of the second century, as is supposed, was prepared the *Peshito*, or *Syriac version*, written for the use of those Christians who spoke the Syriac, or Aramæan tongue. Greek copies were also multiplied, and ere long the whole Scripture was translated into Latin. In all these copies and versions thus multiplied and scattered throughout Christendom, for the use of the churches, there is a *remarkable agreement* touching the books recognized as *Canonical*, in the *names of the writers*, and in the *matter* which these books contain. “By comparing these versions, they will be found to embrace the same discourses, parables, miracles, doctrines, precepts, and Divine institutions. Indeed, so literal have been most versions of the New Testament, that they answer to one another, and to the original, almost word for word.” *

Our argument is now complete, and must, as we think, be regarded as conclusive by every dispassionate mind. The fact that these separate books,

* Alexander on the Canon, page 249. If any of our readers are desirous of examining this subject at greater length, they are referred to an exceedingly satisfactory series of letters by Rev. J. A. Smith, D.D., entitled, “*The Spirit in the Word*,” published by Church & Goodman, Chicago; also, works on the Canon, by Prof. Gaussen, of Geneva, and the late Dr. Archibald Alexander, of Princeton, N. J.; the latter work published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

forming the New Testament, were published during the lifetime of their reputed authors, and yet were never disowned; the fact that all the early writers of note received these books as Canonical; that Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Philastrius, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, Dionysius, the Council of Laodicea, and the Council of Carthage, accepted them, and made catalogues of them, answering in all essential particulars to our Scriptures; the fact that the early fathers quoted from the books we now possess, and from no others, though there were *other books purporting to be written by men standing high in the regard of the Church*; the fact that even the *enemies* of Christianity, who wrote against the Scriptures, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, *quote* from these books, and refer to them in such a way as to prove that they were in their day regarded as Canonical; with the additional fact that all the early copies and versions accord substantially with our present Scriptures; these facts, we say, form a *chain of evidence* which *has never*, and which we believe *can never be broken*.

How grateful should we be to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for having put it into our power thus to demonstrate to the satisfaction of all the unprejudiced, the *genuineness of the books which compose our Scriptures*! Remembering how much depends upon this; that uncertainty and doubt here would open up the flood-gates of interminable speculation, and set us adrift, like mariners upon the

ocean, without chart or compass; we can but thank our Heavenly Father for the certainty which he enables us here to reach. A God of infinite goodness and boundless love, has not only *given* us his word, has not only *handed it down* from generation to generation, amid the convulsions and revolutions which have marked the history of the race, but he has put it into our power *to prove*, beyond a *reasonable* doubt, that this is in very truth his will, as originally given to the saints.

For *this*, and for all thine *other* manifestations of kindness to a ruined race,

“Being of Beings, may our praise
Thy courts with grateful fragrance fill;
Still may we stand before thy face,
Still hear and do thy sovereign will;
To thee may all our thoughts arise,
Ceaseless, accepted sacrifice.”

CHAPTER X.

“Almighty God, to thee
Be endless honors done;
The sacred persons three,
The Godhead only one.
Where reason fails, with all her powers,
There faith prevails, and love adores.”

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—MATT. xxviii. 19.

By the three last chapters, we attained a most important end. We reached the conclusion that the Bible, *as we have it, is inspired*, and as such, is an *infallible* guide in all the matters of which it treats. Now, we have something solid upon which to stand. Hereafter, a quotation fairly made from Scripture, settles, with us, any question which may arise. If the *Bible* says thus and thus, then *God says it*; and what God says, must be true. And now, before we go farther, we must congratulate our readers upon the position we have reached. How satisfactory to know, that in considering the great themes which we are yet to discuss, we can place our feet upon solid ground, and *know* that the conclusions

at which we arrive are true? In the midst of all the uncertainty and doubt of human speculations and conjectures, and surmises, how comforting to know that we can fall back upon the infallible teachings of God's Word, and say, "this *is* so, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The subject for discussion, in this chapter, will be the

MODE OF THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

Having seen that God *does* exist, we now inquire, "*How does he exist—in what mode or form?*" This question, as you at once perceive, brings before us the great doctrine of the *Unity and the Trinity of the Godhead*.

The belief of all Evangelical Christians, founded upon the Word of God, as we shall see, is, that God exists as *one God*, as a unit, and yet that there are *three persons* in the Godhead—distinguished in Scripture as *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. In attempting to unfold this great subject, it is proper that our readers should be warned that we shall find it a *great mystery*; yet we are not, on that account, to shrink from its investigation; nor, because of this, is the doctrine to be rejected. That it would be a mystery to us, is just what, in the very nature of the case, we have reason to expect; for God is *infinite*, and we are *finite*, and the *finite* can not comprehend the *infinite*. When, then, men reject this or any other profound mystery of revelation, because they can not fully grasp it, they exhibit the utmost arrogance, and display the highest folly.

Notwithstanding, then, we have a great mystery before us, still, with an humble dependence upon Divine grace, we can, by a careful and prayerful investigation, attain light by its consideration. And,

1. Let us state just what we here believe :

The Bible teaches that there is but one only, the living and true God. Yet it also teaches that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, known by the distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

To this doctrine, of course, the corrupt and darkened minds of men have interposed many objections. The most commonly alleged cavil is, *that the doctrine is unreasonable*. Some have even gone so far as to pronounce it *impossible*. We need not state here, that like most of the doctrines of God's Word, this has been perverted, and it is to the distorted and perverted doctrine that men have raised the above-named objections. If we held that God is *one* in the same sense in which he is *three*, then certainly would we be stating what would be *unreasonable*, what would indeed be *impossible*. But when we state, upon the authority of Scripture, that God is both *one* and *three*—that is, *one* in *one* sense and *three* in *another* sense—we affirm nothing either absurd or unreasonable. And this is our doctrine : God is *one* in his essence, his eternity, his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, his will, his affections, his justice, and holiness ; *one* in being, and *one* in thought. This is the sense in which God is a *unit*.

He is *one* in all the *attributes, qualities* and *aims* of his Divine nature; and yet there is in him a three-fold distinction, of *personality*, of *office*, and of *agency*.^{*} This three-fold distinction does not hold as to any attribute, quality, or power of the Divine nature, but is *personal*, including *varied office* and *operation*, authorizing the *Scriptures* to *speak of him*, and *us* to *think of him*, as *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*. *One* in essence, *one* in purpose, *one* in attributes, *one* in will, *one* in thought, God is yet *three* in the sense of a *tri-personal* distinction, to each of which persons may be, and is, appropriately assigned a *specific work* in the great schemes of Providence and grace.

We have already said that there is a mystery here, but however *above* reason, we most emphatically deny that this doctrine is *contrary to reason*. *So far from this, we find every where throughout the universe of God, something wonderfully analogous to what we are taught to believe exists in the great Author of the universe. It is a remarkable fact, revealed to us by science, that simple and uncompounded unity is not found among all the creations of the Divine hand.*

^{*} "Although this tri-personal constitution of the Godhead is altogether beyond the capacity of reason, and is ascertained to us only through a supernatural revelation, there is evidently no contradiction in the two-fold proposition, that God is one, and yet Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are that one God. They are one in one sense, and yet three-fold in an entirely different sense. The eternal, self-existent, Divine essence, constituting all those Divine perfections, called attributes of God, is, in the same sense and degree, common to all the persons. In this sense they are one. But this Divine essence exists eternally, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost, distinguished by personal properties. In *this* sense, they are three. We believe this, not because we understand it, but because thus God has revealed himself."—*Hodge's Outlines*, pp. 159, 160.

God, as it would seem, with the express purpose of writing the great lesson of his own *unity* in *trinity*, and *trinity* in *unity*, so plainly upon nature that none could mistake it, has *created* all things both as *units* and as *compounds*; as *one* in one sense, and *two* or *more* in another. Look for yourselves, and see the proof of this wherever you turn. *Take the material world itself*. What is it? Manifestly a *unit*. We speak of it truly, justly, rightly, as *the world*; as *one*. So it is characterized both by the learned and unlearned. And yet this *unity*, this *one* world covers a *trinity*. There are just three great material kingdoms which compose this single world — the *animal*, the *vegetable*, and the *mineral*. If one of these were wanting, the world would not be *our* world; if they were *all* wanting, there would be *no* world.

But again, descend to each one of these kingdoms and examine it, and the same remarkable peculiarity will be found. *Every separate unit* in each kingdom of nature, includes under *its unity* a *plurality*. Take a tree. It is *one*, and yet it is *more* than one. It is made up of *solids*, *liquids*, and *gases*. Thus, in every *tree*, *plant*, and *shrub* on earth, we have a *unity* in *trinity*. Take a *mineral* — any specimen you please from the mineral kingdom — and chemistry shows that it is not *simple*, but *compound*. A block of marble appears to the eye a simple, uncompounded substance; but when analyzed, we find it to consist of a white metal called *calcium*, a substance known as *carbon*, and a gas called *oxygen*. Marble is thus a *trinity* in *unity*. It is *one* in one sense, and *three*

in another. Surely, there is nothing unreasonable here. The substance known as *soapstone*, in itself a simple body, and to the eye a *unit*, includes three radically distinct substances — *magnesium*, *silicon*, and *oxygen*. The substance known among geologists as *feldspar*, is composed of silicon, potassium, and oxygen; and is thus a *trinity* in *unity*. *Carbonate of Lime*, when analyzed, is found to consist of calcium, carbon, and oxygen. And thus we might take you through the entire *mineral* kingdom, and we would every where find written in letters of light, *unity* in *plurality*; and *very* generally, *unity* in *trinity*.

And the same is true in the animal kingdom. What is man himself but a *unit* in one sense, and a *three-fold* existence in another? As you survey him with the eye of sense, he appears before you as a single object. We speak of him as a person, a man. But when otherwise considered, there is a *trinity* in him. He consists of *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*. *These are his necessary elements*, if we may so speak. They are essential to his existence upon the earth. In *one* sense he is *one*, in another *three*. We readily admit this, and in the admission, behold no contradiction; nothing unreasonable or impossible.

It may, however, be said, that *God* is a *spirit*, and that all the comparisons *now* made are with *material* things; and we may be accused of *unfairness* in illustrating spiritual things by physical objects. Well, then, leaving all matter out of the account, let us look at a purely spiritual existence. Consider the mind of man, which all will admit to be a spiritual

object, and most like Deity of any thing on earth. And here, in the mind itself, we find this *unity in variety*. The mind is *one*; and yet it is, in its operations, offices, and functions, *more than one*. While the mind is a *unit*, it is, according to some of our best mental philosophers, a *trinity*. All its powers may be included in the *intellect*, the *moral sense*, and the *affections*. Under these three heads, according to some, all the faculties of the mind may be classified. A broad, clear line, separates the *intellect* from the *moral sense* and the *affections*, and a line as broad and as clear separates these again from that, and from each other. The Scriptures do not make any greater distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, than we are compelled to make between these three necessary divisions of the human mind; and yet, who will say that the mind is not a unit? Surely no one will argue that we ascribe to man *three* minds, because we recognize these three necessary distinctions in his spiritual being. Why, then, should we be accused of holding to three Gods, when we contend for the three personal distinctions in the one Godhead.

But more than this, even. It is always to be considered that the *Bible represents the unity* of God as a most *perfect union* of the *three persons*. It is not *merely* a *virtual union*, or a *substantial union*, or one that is so in appearance merely. It is not a *co-partnership* of three persons in one great work, in which they *appear* to spectators *as one*; but the union of the three persons in the Godhead is so per-

fect that there *is but one God*. In looking at the subject in the light of its *unity*, we lose sight of all distinctions, and see but *one God, one only, living and true*. But then, when on the other hand, we are considering each of the persons in the Godhead in the light of his *own personality*, there is no embarrassment in giving to him a *perfect individuality*. Thus, when we stand by the banks of the Jordan, after the Saviour's baptism, and hear the *Father* say from heaven, "This is my beloved *Son*, in whom I am well pleased," and see the *Holy Ghost* descending and resting, in the form of a dove, upon the *Son*, we are not troubled with any doubts as to the *identity* of each separate person. The mind *is satisfied* that it is the *second person* who stands before us incarnate; that it is the *First* who speaks from heaven, and that it is the *Third* who descends like a dove! And we know that this Father, Son, and Spirit, is, after all, but *one God*. We see the *unity* to be perfect when we consider God *in his unity*, and the distinct *personality* perfect when we consider him *in his trinity*.

Now it is a wonderful fact, that there is something strikingly analogous to this in the combinations of nature. You look at a pure white ray of light, as it falls through your lattice upon the carpet, and you are not disturbed with the appearance of any diversity. You see before you a *perfect unity*. There is one object; *one ray*, white, and pure, and beautiful. This is *one aspect of the sunbeam*. Interpose now a prism, and there falls before you, not the *one white*, but *three colored rays*; a *trinity* is before you now as

clear and distinct as was the *unity* a moment before ; and a *trinity* about which you have no more doubts than you had of the *unity* you so lately saw. You *do* not, you *can* not doubt the distinctions between those rays. The red, the yellow, and the blue, are no longer blended into one. As viewed now, they are clearly distinct. As a perfect *union* existed before, so a perfect *individuality* exists now. Yet it is the *same ray* in each instance. It is *perfect* in its *unity*, *perfect* also, in its *trinity*, and in all the aspects taken of it, it is but one ray still. Nor does the mind find any difficulty in considering the sunbeam now in one aspect, and now in another. We are not troubled with doubts of its trinity when we look at it in its unity ; nor of its unity when we see it under the prism. We do not hesitate fully to accept *both* states as characterizing the same thing. We can see how the ray of light is a *unit* in one sense, and a *plurality* in another ; and we discover no contradiction, no impossibility in it.

So, too, let a chemist place upon the table before him a drop of the *oil of lavender*. He may examine it in every way possible ; he may subject it to the test of the most powerful microscopes, and he will find it nothing *more*, nothing *less*, than a drop of that peculiar oil. Looking upon it as a whole, it is a *perfect* unit. But let it be subjected to a chemical analysis, and a radical change at once takes place, which sets before the chemist the *three* things—oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon—the elements of which the oil is composed. Now, he has *no more*

difficulty in seeing *oxygen* there, and *hydrogen* there, and *carbon* there, than he before had in seeing only the *one* drop of lavender. Is he disturbed by this? Does he cry "impossible?" No; he says "this is still but the one drop of lavender viewed now in another aspect. That drop was but the oxygen, hydrogen and carbon in *one* form, and these are but the drop of lavender in another." Viewed as a unit, there is a perfect oneness; viewed as a trinity, there is a perfect distinction; and the mind *labors not* when taking in the idea of both the *unity* and the *trinity* — the *unity* in *one* sense, and the *trinity* in *another* — of this same single thing.

And thus it is with the two-fold mode of the Divine existence. When we look at God, or are called to consider him in his *unity*, we behold that that unity is perfect. We have no doubts on the subject. Like the sunbeam, the tri-personality melts away, and blends into the one pure ray of an undivided Deity. Thus, when we look at God in the distinctions of his personality, we see the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as clear, distinct, well-defined persons; and yet we are troubled with no difficulties, for we know that the red, the yellow, and the blue rays, after all, form but *one* sunbeam. When we look at God in his *unity*, we know that the *trinity* is there; and when we consider him in his *trinity*, we know that the *unity* is there. And in all this, the well-balanced mind labors not. When God says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me," we know that we are in that place

called upon to consider the Divine Being in his *unity*, and we are not afraid that the doctrine of the *trinity* will suffer. When we are told to go and teach all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we at once perceive that we look upon God in his *trinity*, and we are not troubled for the doctrine of his *oneness*. The *sunbeam*, whether viewed in its *unity* or its *trinity*, remains a *sunbeam* still.

In presenting this argument, let it be distinctly understood that we do not regard it as final, nor do we assert that this aspect of the case should determine the faith of man in a matter of such importance. Our object, in this discussion, is simply to show *how narrow a view those take who reject this doctrine upon the assumption that it is unreasonable*. With *all nature* full of *analogous modes of being*, how can any reasonable man say that the tri-personal existence of the one God is an *absurdity*?

Nor do we affirm that the illustrations we have used fully meet the requirements of the case; for who will dare to say that *any thing* under heaven is a *perfect* counterpart of what exists in the world of glory? But we do most *emphatically affirm* that these comparisons are full enough and perfect enough to raise the strongest possible presumption in *favor* of the doctrine we advocate. We would ask those who differ from us, if every thing we behold around us, and within us; nay, if the universe *itself*, exists both in *unity* and in *plurality* — in *unity* in one sense, and in *plurality* in another — *why may*

not the Creator of that universe also so exist? We verily believe that question can never be satisfactorily answered.

And now, behold *how wonderful* is our God! Reader, have you learned to fear before him? Have you been brought to reverence his name? It is by a careful *consideration* of his *majesty, dignity, and glory*, that we are brought to bow in submission at his feet.

It may perhaps be alleged that this doctrine of the Trinity can have no *practical* bearings. Nothing is farther from the truth than this. Men have actually been converted from atheism by the contemplation of the Christian Trinity. This was the case two hundred and fifty years ago at Heidelberg, where the distinguished Professor of Divinity, Francis Junius, was brought to a knowledge of the truth "by a sense of God rolled in upon his soul by means of this stupendous mystery of the Gospel." Having fallen into great looseness of living, and become an atheist in his opinions, his Christian father kindly puts a New Testament in his hands, requesting him to read it; and the result is, that, opening upon a passage most of all likely, as it would commonly be supposed, to offend and fortify his skepticism, he is visited, in its mysterious and sublime words, by such a sense of God as overwhelms and instantly stifles the doubts which no mere argument of books and treatises had been able to remove. He shall give the account in his own words :

“ Here, therefore, I open that New Testament, the gift of heaven ; at first sight, and without design, I light upon that most august chapter of the Evangelist and Apostle, St. John : ‘ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,’ etc. I read part of the chapter, and am so affected as I read, that, on a sudden, I perceive the divinity of the subject, and the majesty and authority of the writing, far exceeding all human eloquence. I shuddered, was confounded, and was so affected that I scarce knew myself. Thou didst remember me, O Lord, my God, for thy great mercy, and didst receive a lost sheep into thy flock.” (Bayle’s Dictionary.)

“ The testimonies of Christian experience rejoicing in this truth, are of course more frequent. Thus the mild and sober Howe, explaining in what manner the Trinity is to be connected with Christian experience, says, co-incidentally with what we have advanced concerning the relational nature of the fact : ‘ When, therefore, we are to consider God as related to us as our God, we must take in and bring together each of these notions and conceptions concerning him ; we must take in the conceptions of each of the persons — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost is my God.’ How admirable a thing is this ! How great and high thoughts ought we to have concerning the privileged state of our case ! Indeed, there is nothing that we have to consider of this God, or to look after the knowledge of, to answer the curiosity of a vain mind, but every

thing and any thing that may answer the necessity of the perishing soul. Whatever is requisite to our real felicity and blessedness, we may look to all that is in God, as determined by a special relation unto us." (Works, p. 1100.)

"Jeremy Taylor, holding the truth of the Christian Trinity to be a truth entirely practical, apprehensible, therefore, in its real evidence, only by experience, says: 'He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostasies and personalities, priorities in co-equalities, and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk of something he knows not what; but the good man who *feels* the power of the Father; to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification, and righteousness; and in whose heart the Spirit is shed abroad; this man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.'

"Again, the Marquis De Renty, a distinguished French disciple of the seventeenth century, opens the secret of his own living experience in his own words: 'I bear in me, ordinarily, an experimental verification and a plenitude of the most holy Trinity, which elevates me to a simple view of God; and with that, I do all that his providence enjoins me, not regarding any thing for the greatness or littleness of it, but only the order of God, and the glory it may render him.' — (Life of De Renty.)

“The testimony of Edwards, a man whose intellectual sobriety and philosophic majesty of character are not to be disrespected, corresponds: ‘And God has appeared glorious unto me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalted thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from the hope of my own good estate, but in a direct view of the glorious things of the Gospel.’ (Life, pp. 132, 133.)

“The celebrated Lady Maxwell, a follower of Wesley, is more abundant in these revelations. She says: ‘Yesterday he made his goodness to pass before me in a most remarkable manner, while attending public worship. I was favored with a clear view of the Trinity, which I never had before, and enjoyed fellowship with a triune God. I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day, and felt my mind fixed, in deep contemplation, upon that glorious, incomprehensible object — the ever-blessed Trinity. Hitherto, I have been led to view the Holy Ghost chiefly as an agent; now I behold him, distinctly, as the third person of the Trinity. I have, in my own soul, an *experimental proof* of the truth of this doctrine, but find human language perfectly insufficient for speaking or writing intelligibly on the subject. Eternity alone can unfold the sacred mystery; but in the mean time, what we may and do comprehend of it is replete with comfort to the Christian.’ (Life, p. 258.)

“It is impossible not to admire the Gospel formula that can so flood the human soul, in its narrowed and blinded state, with the sense of God, and raise it to a pitch of blessing so transcendent. The amazing power of the Trinity, acting thus on the human imagination, and the contribution thus made to Christian experience, can not be over-estimated.” *

Reader, has God revealed himself to you, as ONE GOD — FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST?

* “The Christian Trinity a Practical Truth.” — Rev. Horace Bushnell, D.D.

CHAPTER XI.

“Yet would I lift my trembling voice,
The Eternal Three in One to sing;
And mingling faith, while I rejoice,
My humble, grateful tribute bring.
All glory to the Eternal Three —
The sacred, undivided One;
To Father, Son, and Spirit, be
Co-equal praise and honors done.”

“There are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word,
and the Holy Ghost.” — I JOHN v. 7.

THE attention of the reader was called, in the last chapter, to the *mode of the Divine existence*; and in stating our belief, it was shown that Evangelical Christians hold *that there is but one God*, and yet that this God exists in a *threefold personality*, recognized in Scripture as *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; that these three are but “one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” To prove that this belief is not absurd and unreasonable, there were presented, in the last chapter, many illustrations from the material and spiritual world — illustrations drawn both from matter and from mind — demonstrating the great fact that *all things* exist as

one in one sense, and as *more than one* in another. The universe, as we saw, is thus filled with modes of being analogous to that which characterizes the Creator; and the intelligent mind, in view of these correspondences, finds no difficulty in admitting that an object may be *one* in one mode of its existence, and *three* or more in another.

You will remember, however, that while claiming for the view which was presented in the last chapter, that it effectually met the common objection of absurdity and unreasonableness, as brought against the evangelical belief, it was distinctly stated that we did not regard the argument, as there set forth, as final. Though the opponents of our faith may never be able effectually to answer the argument from the analogy of nature, still we must place this important doctrine upon the impregnable foundation of infallible truth, before we leave it.

Our purpose, then, in this chapter, is to ask, *What does SCRIPTURE reveal touching the mode of the Divine Existence?*

And here let it be considered, that all admit that Scripture is clear and emphatic in declaring that there is but *one God*. Its invariable declarations are, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one Lord*." So full of evidence is the Word of God upon this point, and so well convinced are all men in Christian lands, concerning the *unity* of the Divine Existence, that we need not pause to enforce it.

The dispute, and the only dispute, is concerning

the other point, that *though one, God yet exists in a trinity of personal distinctions*; that while there is but one God, there are three persons in the Godhead, distinguished as *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. This is the point in question, and our effort now will be to illustrate and enforce the faith of God's children in this matter by an appeal to the plain and positive teachings of the infallible Word. And,

1. *What do the Old Testament Scriptures teach concerning the tri-personality of the Deity?* If God does exist as a trinity of persons, a trinity in unity, we may expect to find an early reference to this important fact in the sacred writings. And, accordingly, upon *the very first page* of the sacred record, we find a plurality of Divine persons in the Godhead shadowed forth. We have it expressed in the *plural* form of the name of God, in the *first* verse of the first chapter of Genesis: "In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth." The word translated "God," is here and throughout the chapter, "*Elohim*," the *plural*, of which "*Eloah*" is the *singular*. Why should the *plural* form be used, if there is not more than one person in the Godhead? And the plural form is used, too, in connection with the singular verb (*bara*), showing a very remarkable grammatical construction. In every language there is this invariable rule, that a verb must agree with its subject in number and person. And yet here is a remarkable departure from this rule. Can it be without any adequate reason?

The reader is here asked to remember the fact

already demonstrated in chapter seventh, that "all Scripture," even its *language, is inspired*. This remarkable construction, then, must have a design. It has been alleged that the plural form of the proper noun is here used to set forth the *dignity* of this glorious Being, and is called the *plural of eminence*. But this does not meet the case, for if this were the reason, we would find the other names of God in the plural also, which we do not, for "*Jehovah*" and "*Shaddai*" are both used, and in many instances we have the two titles, *Jehovah-Elohim*, united in the same expression, one *singular* and the other *plural*. As an objection to the view that this plural noun expresses a plurality of persons in the Godhead, it has been alleged that it is used when speaking of angels and heathen gods. True; but in these cases, the *plural verb* is used also, and the anomalous construction of the language does not meet us. On the whole, we are inclined to the belief that we have in this peculiarity the plurality of persons in the Godhead *decidedly*, if not conclusively, set forth.

Nor is the *singular* number alone employed even when the *unity* of God is expressly asserted. In that strong text, affirming the oneness of God, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," it is "Hear, O Israel, *Jehovah*, our '*Elohim*,' is one *Jehovah*." (Deuteronomy vi. 4.) So in other passages in which God is represented in other relations, the *plural* name is employed. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him" (*in his makers*), "Thy maker is thy husband" (*thy makers is thy husband*), "Remember

thy Creator" (*thy Creators*). These instances show that there must be some *design*, some *purpose* in this remarkable employment of the plural form.

Standing, however, alone, we might not regard this use of the plural form of the noun as conclusive proof of the Trinity, but we find our position greatly strengthened by the use, in many places, of the *plural form of the pronoun when God is represented as speaking to or of himself*. In Genesis i. 26, we read, "*And God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness*. So God created man in his own image; in the image of *God* created he him." Here the plural form of the pronoun used by God himself clearly shadows forth the plurality of persons in the Godhead. Then after the fall, God says, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," a form of expression hardly to be accounted for on any other ground than the one for which we contend. Then, again, touching the building of the tower of Babel, God said, "Go to, let us go down and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." We have, however, in the 6th chapter of Isaiah, a very remarkable instance of the use of the personal pronouns by the Almighty. In asking for one to go upon an important mission, God inquires, "Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for us;" first employing the *singular* pronoun, as if to express his *unity*, his *oneness*, and then the *plural*, as if to declare a plurality of persons. It would be difficult to show upon what principles of criticism these passages can be explained, without the admis-

sion that God is in *some sense more than one*. And the argument from this last quoted passage is very strong, when we remember that the New Testament assures us expressly that both the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost were present* when God asked, "who will go for us." In the 12th chapter of John, and 41st verse, we are assured that Isaiah saw, at this very time, the glory of Christ, and spake of him. And Paul declares that it was the Holy Ghost who spake a part of the words written by Isaiah in the chapter from which the above quotation is made. His language is this: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet, unto our Fathers, saying, go unto this people and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." — (Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27.)

Look, now, at this passage in the light of these declarations in the New Testament. Isaiah says that God asks the question, "Who will go for us" upon this mission? John, speaking by inspiration, in the 12th chapter of his Gospel, says that at this very time Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, "*and spake of him.*" And Paul declares that the Holy Ghost was present at the time referred to by Isaiah, and uttered, as the vicegerent of the Godhead, a portion of the very chapter in which the words, "Who will

go for us?" are found. These considerations certainly serve to throw a strong light upon the use of the pronoun in its plural form. If it is God the Father who employs these words—if Christ and the Holy Ghost were both present at this august council—then it is easy to see why God says "us." Upon any other supposition, the passage is inexplicable. It will not do to say, as some have done, that the *plural* is here used to express *dignity*, for the *singular* is used in the same sentence. "Whom shall *I* send," etc. Nor will it answer the demands of the case to affirm that God couples with himself angelic beings, in the inquiry, "Who will go for *us*?"—for upon angels is no where in Scripture conferred the honor of thus participating in the councils of the Most High. They are his *servants*. He *uses* them, but never advises with them. "Are they not all ministering spirits, *sent forth* to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" If, then, the plural pronoun is here used, not to imply dignity, nor to signify that the angels were included in the Divine councils, there is but one other conclusion left to us—*It implies plurality in the Godhead.*

In the *plural* form, then, of the name of God, and of the pronoun used by God himself, do we find our *first* argument for the Trinity in the Old Testament Scriptures. Attempts, of course, have been made to explain away this peculiar grammatical construction, but in vain. It would have been *as easy*, and certainly *as natural*, for God to have employed, invariably, the singular form—both in his distinctive titles

and in the personal pronouns — as to have used the plural.

And then, too, is it not strange that, when one great purpose of the Almighty is to impress upon the minds of the Jews the vital truth that there is but *one God* — when he asserts this again and again, and punishes those with the severest judgments who hold and teach the contrary — is it not strange that he should, from the very *first* verse of Genesis, employ terms which certainly *imply* a plurality, in some form, in the Deity? There was "*Eloah*," the singular — why not use it? There was the singular pronoun — why not employ it? Why not say, "Let *me* make man in *my* image, after *my* likeness?" I know of no satisfactory reply to all this, but what is furnished by our doctrine: that God is *one* in one sense, and *more* than one in another. Upon this hypothesis, we can readily and naturally account for this anomalous construction of language, and for this peculiar use of nouns and pronouns; and upon no other.

2. We have, however, in the Old Testament, still further proof of our doctrine, and, if possible, still more clear and convincing, even, than what we have now adduced. In the 45th Psalm, we have *one Divine person* represented as addressing *another Divine person*, and saying, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, thy God hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

This is a very remarkable passage. A person is here addressed *as God*. It is said that he has a throne and a scepter. The throne is said to be an *everlasting* throne, and the scepter a *righteous* one. Whose throne is this — whose scepter is this — but God's? But then the address continues, and *another* Divine person is introduced. Because this first person mentioned wields a righteous scepter — because he loves righteousness and hates wickedness — “therefore, *God, thy God* hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness.” And now, one of two things is certain: there are either more Gods than one — which, of course, can not be true — or there are more *persons* than one in the Godhead. One of these positions, we must take. Which shall it be? To confirm this position, let it be remembered that Paul, by inspiration, quotes this very passage, in the first chapter of Hebrews, and says that God the Father is here speaking to Christ — that the *first* person is here addressing the *second* person; thus fully demonstrating the reality of the distinction which we make. When the expression is used, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever,” *Christ* is meant, says Paul; and when it is said, “Therefore, *God, thy God* hath annointed thee,” it is *God the Father*, or *first* person, who is named. (See HEB. i.)

But again, in the 110th Psalm, we have a passage of a similar character. “*The Lord* said unto *my Lord*, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Here, *two* persons have the same divine title applied to them; they are both

called "*Lord*." We might be puzzled by this, had we not an explanation given us of the apparent difficulty, by Christ himself, in the 22d chapter of Matthew. Jesus asked the Pharisees, on a certain occasion, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" They say unto him, "The son of David." He saith unto them, "How, then, doth *David in spirit call him Lord*, saying, *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word,*" etc. Nor do we wonder at this, for it is only in the light of the doctrine of the plurality of persons in the Godhead, that such passages of Scripture become intelligible.

There are many other passages of a similar character, to which reference might here be made; but it is only needful to refer to one more, before inviting you to a consideration of the proofs from the New Testament. This passage is found in the 48th chapter of Isaiah, and the 16th verse; and is as follows: "Come ye near unto me; hear ye this, I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me." An examination of this whole chapter will show that here a Divine person is speaking. In the 12th verse, he says: "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called; I am he, *I am the first, I also am the last*. Mine hand also hath *laid the foundation of the earth*, and my right hand hath *spanned the heavens*." Surely, this is a Divine person. No other could use such

language as this of himself. And yet *this* person says, "*The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me.*" Are there, then, two or more Gods? No, this is impossible. The person speaking here is evidently the Lord Jesus Christ—the second person in the Trinity. He was "*sent*" into the world, to redeem it. The Father as the first person, and the Holy Spirit as the third, are here represented as sending Christ, the second person; and thus we have here the threefold personality, fully presented.

It is proper that we should here add, that upon Unitarian or Socinian grounds, no satisfactory explanation of such passages as these can be given. To avoid the force of such texts, resort must be had either to wholly false and vicious principles of criticism, or to a rejection of the plenary inspiration of the sacred text.

Without, however, detaining you further in the Old Testament, we turn to the New, where the doctrine of the triune existence of the Divine Being, like all the other great doctrines of our holy religion, is fully exhibited.

1. *The first proof we here adduce, is that which is afforded in the account given us of the miraculous conception of our Lord Jesus Christ. Three distinct Divine agencies are mentioned in connection with this remarkable event. We have first one Divine Being sending his angel to announce the coming wonder. The declaration is that "the angel Gabriel was sent from God." (Luke i. 26.) Then we have the Holy Ghost mentioned as the efficient agent in*

this great mystery. "The power of the *Highest* shall overshadow thee." (Luke i. 35.) And in the third place, Jesus Christ is introduced as the object of it. And these three *persons are all mentioned* in such a way that a dispassionate reader would at once say, "*these are all equally Divine.*" The relation of God the Father, of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, in this wondrous work of incarnation, demonstrates the *tri-personality* of the Divine existence.

2. But again, *the same thing is clearly shown in the scene at the Saviour's baptism.* The record is, that after his baptism Christ came up out of the water, "and lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here, again, we have evidently the same three persons who have so often before appeared in the sacred record. Christ, the second person in the Trinity, as the object of the rite of baptism; the Holy Ghost, the third person, descending like a dove and resting upon him; and the Father, speaking from heaven and honoring the Son by a personal recognition. Nothing can be more convincing than this. How is the conclusion from such a scene to be avoided? Upon what theory will the opponents of this doctrine explain away the obvious teaching here? Will they say that it was not the Father whose voice was heard speaking from heaven? that the Holy Ghost, who descended in the form of a dove, was not a Divine person? that Christ, who was bap-

tized, was a mere man? To make such assertions, is to exhibit the fatal weakness of their cause. The obvious teaching here, is that for which we contend. The dispassionate reader of Scripture exclaims at once, "This is a scene in which Deity is the chief actor. The Godhead is here evidently exhibited in a *Triune Existence*." This has been, in every age, the belief of the Church, and by no device can this belief be changed.

3. *We have, however, still another proof in the language of our Saviour, as recorded in the 15th chapter of the Gospel by John.* Christ, in this chapter, speaks of himself in such terms that we must infer his Divine character. He says that he is "*one*" with the Father. He declares that the man who "*hates*" him, "*hates the Father also*," and that the man who hath "*seen*" him "*hath seen the Father also*." After speaking thus emphatically of himself and the Father, and of both *as Divine — as equal — nay, as one*; he then speaks of the Holy Ghost as a person, and as Divine. His language is, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father? *He shall testify of me*." What language can more clearly set forth a three-fold personality? Here is the Father, and here the Son, *one with the Father, and yet distinct*, and here the Holy Spirit *proceeding from the Father, sent by the Son*, and as a distinct personality, *testifying* concerning the Son. Surely, this is very strong and pertinent language!

But once more. We read in John x. 15, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." This is the language of Christ. Now that the Father knew Christ *perfectly*, all will admit. But Christ claims to know the Father *even as he is known by the Father*. This, then, is a claim to *Divine* knowledge; in other words, a claim to Divinity. But this is not all. The same claim is set up for the Holy Ghost in 1 Corinthians ii. 10, 11: "For the Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Surely, there can be no mistaking this language. Even as a man's own spirit knows what is in man, *so the Holy Ghost knows what is in God*. Is not this Divine knowledge? And to possess Divine knowledge, *is to be Divine*. Here, then, is the Trinity of Divine persons; the Father perfectly knowing the Son, the Son having perfect knowledge of the Father, and the Holy Ghost possessing the same knowledge. How can this language be explained, except upon the orthodox belief?

We have also the same truth clearly taught in the 16th chapter of John's Gospel. Christ is about to leave the world and go to the Father, and the disciples are distressed at the prospect of his leaving them. He comforts them, however, with the words (v. 7-15), "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto

you ; and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness, because I go unto my Father, and ye see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he also speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine ; therefore, said I, he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Let the reader carefully study this language. Here are three persons presented—the Father and the Holy Ghost, and Christ, who is speaking of them. Christ claims that *all things that the Father hath, are his*. Is not this a claim to Divinity? "*All things?*" What, then, can the Father *be* which Christ *is not*? But Christ manifestly assigns to the Holy Ghost, also, Divine prerogatives. "He will reprove," that is, *convince*, "*the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.*" Who can do this, but God only? This work of conviction requires a power more than *human*—more than *angelic*. Does any one dare to say that a *mere man*, or *angel*, or any but a *Divine* being, can *convince a soul of sin*? "*To lead into all truth,*" too, is asserted, in the 13th verse, to be another prerogative of the Holy Ghost. Who can

do this, but God only? The obvious inference from this language, then, is, that there are *three* Divine persons — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

4. But again. *In the great commission which Christ gives to his Disciples, we have the same doctrine clearly taught.* "Go," says he, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Of this passage, we have to make two remarks: If Christ were not Divine, and if the Holy Ghost were not Divine, *then would it have been the grossest blasphemy to couple their names with God's, in the formula of baptism.* But Christ could not have been guilty of blasphemy. He, then, and the Holy Ghost, are Divine. But if our doctrine of the threefold personality in the one Godhead be not true, then we have here three Gods, which can not be. God, then, is *one* in one sense, and *three* in another.

5. Then, too, the same conclusion is forced upon us by the *formula* known as *the apostolical benediction*, which is given in these inspired words: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Are there not three persons here named? Are they not named as Divine? Are not the "*grace*," "*love*," and "*communion*," here specified, *Divine gifts*? Who can bestow *grace* but God? Whose prerogative is it to impart *love* to the soul? Who can hold the *communion* with the soul here asked for, but a Divine person? And yet, though *three* Divine persons are here designated, there is but *one* God. Do

not these passages, then, fully sustain the evangelical churches in the position they have taken touching the *mode* of the Divine existence?

And thus, did we deem it necessary, we might go forward and demonstrate, by an appeal to the clear and undeniable utterances of Scripture, that the *names and titles* peculiar to Deity are ascribed alike to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that the *perfections* belonging alone to God, are ascribed alike to each; that each is said to be eternal, almighty, omniscient, omnipotent—infinite in holiness, truth and benevolence; that the *works* to which Deity alone is competent—such as *creation*, the *preservation* of all things created, the *resurrection* of the body, the *inspiration* of prophets and apostles, the *sanctification* of the soul, and *indwelling* in the hearts of the regenerate—are assigned alike to each; and, to crown all, we are taught in Scripture to ascribe *Divine worship* to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Will the opponents of the Tri-personality of the Godhead, attempt to account for all this? There are not three Gods: there are, therefore—for this is the only alternative—THREE PERSONS in the ONE GODHEAD. To this conclusion, we are irresistibly driven.

We can, however, pursue this subject no farther. A volume, by no means inconsiderable in size, might be filled with the Scripture proofs for the doctrine of the Trinity. Enough has now been adduced to convince the general reader that this doctrine is not one of human invention. The Scriptures surely

teach it; and, being Divinely inspired, we are bound to receive it upon their authority.

And now, reader, what is this God, thus existing as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to you? Have you a personal interest in him? Can you say — God the Father is my Father, reconciled to me through the merit and righteousness of God the Son? Can you say — Jesus is my Saviour, his righteousness has been applied to me by the Holy Ghost, the third person in the adorable Trinity? Can you say — the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost? he has enlightened *my* mind in the knowledge of Christ — he has commenced the work of sanctification in *my* soul — he has taken up his abode within *me*, and is abiding there, a welcome guest?

Remember, that there is great danger lest we hold this sublime doctrine of the Trinity as a mere *theory* — a beautiful *speculation*. This it should never be to any one. Each person in the Godhead has a work to do for every soul that is saved — the *Father* to justify and adopt it; the *Son* to redeem and intercede for it; and the *Holy Ghost* to apply to it the blood of Christ, and sanctify and seal it for eternal felicity. Is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, doing this great work for you? If not, why? Can you be saved without redemption, justification, or sanctification? Can you attain to heaven, and to eternal felicity without the aid of this glorious Being? O no; you can not. God *must* become your God and Father; Christ must be your

Mediator, and Advocate ; and the Holy Ghost must be your Comforter and Sanctifier. Take God, then, Father, Son, and Spirit, as yours. Receive him in the arms of your faith, that he may make you his for time and for eternity.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

THE LOVE OF GOD,

AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST,

BE WITH YOU ALL,

AMEN.

CHAPTER XII.

“O who shall paint him? Let the sweetest tone
That ever trembled on the harps of heaven
Be discord; let the chanting seraphim,
Whose anthem is eternity, be dumb;
For praise and wonder, adoration, all
Melt into muteness, ere they soar to thee,
Thou sole perfection! Theme of countless worlds!”

MILTON.

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”—HEBREWS i. 8.

WE call attention, in this chapter, to questions, than which none more important can claim the thoughts of man. Is Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in Palestine something more than eighteen hundred years ago, *truly God*? Did he exist from all eternity as *one* of the *three persons* in the Godhead? Did he, about the four thousandth year of the world's history, assume a human body by being born of a woman? And did he, after the acts and teachings ascribed to him, the sufferings and sorrows endured by him, finally *die* as to his human nature, to *atone* for the sins of a lost world? And after three days continuance in the grave, did he *ascend to heaven* to plead that cause, in the presence of his Father, for

which he suffered and died on earth? In short, the *great question* upon the consideration of which we now enter, is this :

IS JESUS CHRIST THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD? IS HE, INDEED, IN ALL RESPECTS EQUAL WITH THE FATHER?

Remember that this is a question of the very highest *practical* consequence, for the Scriptures every where represent Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of a lost world. Now, if he be not Divine, then have we, after all, no sure ground of hope. In a concern of such magnitude, where the interests of the soul for eternity are involved, we can trust neither *man* nor *angel*. A *Divine* power alone is sufficient for these things. If God has not laid help, in this matter, upon one who indeed is *mighty*; yea, even upon an *Almighty* arm, then it is *mockery* to talk to us of his *power to save to the uttermost*. You here consider, then, not merely a theoretical question, but one which to *each* of you has the most weighty, *practical interest*. *Take heed, then, how this question is considered.*

Let it be remembered, too, *that we accept no compromises* in a matter of such pressing moment as this. We are not to be deluded with the admission that Jesus Christ is the *greatest and best* of created beings; that he stands *higher* than angel and archangel; for between the *highest created* intelligence and God, there is yet an *infinite* distance. The might of an archangel's arm is *absolute weakness* when compared with the Divine Omnipotence. We

therefore abate not one iota of our high claim that Christ is "*very God of very God*," of one substance with the Father, an uncreated, eternal, self-existence; that all that can be predicated of God is his in the *fullest*, most *perfect*, and most *unqualified* sense. And all this we now proceed to prove by an appeal to the plain and positive teachings of the Scriptures, presented under *five* distinct heads.

1. *We prove that Jesus Christ is the true God by the names and titles ascribed to him in Scripture.* A careful examination of God's Word will show a most amazing array of proof under this division of the subject. Every *name*, every *title* given to God, is given to Christ not only, but it would appear that *every name by which God can be characterized*, every title of which we can *conceive* by which to designate the *true God*, is applied to Jesus Christ. The infallible Word uses such language as the following, when speaking of him: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, *O Most Mighty*, with thy glory and thy majesty." (Psalms lxx. 3.) "Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever; the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter." (Ps. xlv. 6.) Isaiah, speaking by the spirit of prophecy, says of him: "Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *the MIGHTY GOD, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*" (Is. ix. 6.) The reader is asked to ponder these words. That they apply to Christ, can not be doubted; for to no other child born on earth, to no other "*son given*"

to man, is such language in the least applicable. And would it not be the very height of aggravated blasphemy to ascribe such titles even to Christ, if he were not truly God? Again, it is said, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name *Emmanuel*, which, being interpreted, is, *God with us*." (Matt. i. 23.) Is not this very emphatic? But again: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the *Word was God*." (John i. 1-5.) And yet again: "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the TRUE GOD and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) And again, "To the *only wise* God, *our Saviour*, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. (Jude 25 v.) And still again, "Whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, *God blessed forever*." (Rom. ix. 5.) Let this suffice, as to the titles of Christ. And now let the intelligent reader ask himself one question: If Christ be *not* God, how *can* such names and titles be truthfully ascribed to him? *Would it not be the grossest blasphemy to do it?*

2. *We prove that Christ is the true God, by the acts ascribed to him in Scripture.* He is said to be the CREATOR of *all* things. "All things were made by him, and without him was not *any thing* made that was made." "He was in the world, and the world was made by him; and the world knew him not." (John i. 1-10.) "By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and

invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers — *all things were created by him and for him*, and he is before all things, and by him *all things consist*." (Col. i. 16, 17.) How full, how explicit, and how conclusive this language! God alone can *create*. Man may take pre-existing materials, and fashion them anew; he may re-shape them, and produce from them objects of use and beauty — but *to create* is a divine prerogative. When, then, it is said of Christ that he *created all things*, we see at once that he must be Divine. He who can bring something out of nothing, must be the *true God*.

But then, Christ is said to UPHOLD what he has *created*. This is also the work of a Divine being. Paul says of him, "Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and *upholding* all things by the word of his power." Such might as this is only lodged in an almighty arm. Divine power alone is *adequate* to the mighty work of *creation*; divine power *alone* is *adequate* to the mighty work of *providence* involved in *upholding* all things. But Jesus of Nazareth is both creator and providence. He must, then, be truly God. But, as though this were not enough, the Scriptures are *full* of evidence as to his *omnipotence* in working. He *healed* the sick, *restored*, with a word, or touch, or look, the lost senses of *sight* and *speech* and *hearing*; he cast out devils, raised the dead, and claimed for himself the power of raising all men from their graves, when the world is to be judged, in the last day. Nay, more; the Scriptures represent him as

that judge who will at length hold that wonderful assize, where all men shall be required to answer "for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad."

And you will bear in mind this very *important* consideration: *that all the works ascribed to Christ are wrought through his own inherent power.* Not simply because the Father wrought through him — *which was, of course, the case,* as the Father and Son are *one*; but these mighty works were performed, and others are to be performed, because *Christ himself* has the *inherent* power to accomplish them. When he would heal the sick, he says: "*I say unto thee, take up thy bed and walk.*" When he would raise the daughter of Jairus to life again, he says: "*I say unto thee, arise.*" When he would restore Lazarus, he says: "*Lazarus, come forth.*" And in regard to his own *inherent* power to bring men up from their graves, in the last day, he himself affirms that "*as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. Of himself,* he performs Divine acts; and must, therefore, be Divine.

3. We prove that Christ is God, because *Divine worship and honor are claimed for him, ascribed to him, and accepted by him.*

That we are to worship God alone, is a truth taught not only by Scripture, but inculcated by the dictates of enlightened reason. Yet it is well known that all men are enjoined, in Scripture, to "*honor the Son even as they honor the Father.*" (John v.

23.) How could this be enjoined if Christ were not Divine? Then, too, we read that at his birth wise men came from the east "*to worship him.*" So, too, we read that a leper once came "*and worshiped him.*" At another time, when Christ had stilled a tempest, they that were in the ship "*came and worshiped him*, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." After his resurrection, as he met his disciples on a certain occasion, we read "that they came and held him by his feet, and *worshiped him.*" And when he ascended in the sight of his disciples, and returned to his Father, it is said that they "*worshiped him*, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Now all this honor and worship is given to our Lord Jesus Christ *without being rebuked by him*. He never once says, "this is not to be ascribed to me." Never once does he reprove those who render to him these Divine honors. Never does the Bible declare that men do wrong in thus worshiping him. Now, how could all this be, if Christ were not Divine? Let the reader turn to the 20th chapter of Exodus, and contemplate the first two commands of the Decalogue, embodied in those solemn words, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children

unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Then let him recall the fact that there is no sin more abhorrent to God than that of idolatry; that there is no form in which the violation of his law has been more terribly punished than in this—the whole Jewish nation being sent into captivity for *seventy years* in consequence of it—and then let him ask himself if Christ, who ever exhibited such solicitude for the integrity of the Divine law, could have consented to see it violated in its most sacred and solemn precepts, without the most prompt and positive condemnation? If he were not God, the worship paid to him while upon earth would have been the grossest insult offered to the majesty of heaven, the most aggravated contempt of that law, which Christ ever regarded with the utmost reverence and love.

Some have sought to evade the force of this argument, by claiming that the worship ascribed to Christ in Scripture, is only such as may with propriety be awarded to any person of great dignity and worth; that it is not the worship due a Divine Being. The utter fallacy of this position will appear when it is remembered that John, in the visions of Patmos, saw the hosts of heaven in the very act of ascribing the *same* honor and worship to the *Father* and the *Son*. The record is, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the

number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive *power*, and *riches*, and *wisdom*, and *strength*, and HONOR, and GLORY, and BLESSING. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, BLESSING, and HONOR, and GLORY, and POWER, be unto HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER." (Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.) What can be more conclusive than this? Here is the Father, the first person in the Trinity, introduced as "*him that sitteth upon the throne*," and the *Lamb* is Christ, the second person; and to *each* is ascribed the *same honor, glory, and power*." United with the Father in receiving the worship of heaven, can Jesus be less than Divine? But,

4. *We prove Christ's Divinity by the relations he sustains to all created beings.* The Scriptures speak of him as the "*King of kings*, and the Lord of lords;" as the "*head over all things*," and as the "*Prince of the kings of the earth*." No language can more clearly designate the *Moral Governor of the Universe*. The "*head over all things*" implies Divine powers and prerogatives. The "*all things*" here are not alone the little affairs of a town or city, the concerns of a province or a kingdom, but the affairs of the *whole* world, throughout all time; and of this world not only, but the affairs of the *whole boundless universe of God*. Think

of it! *Creator* and *Upholder* of all, as we have already seen, here is one who is "*head over all things.*" Can such a being be less than Divine? Can the "*head over all things*" himself have a head? Can he be *created*? No; difficult as it may be to conceive of Christ as *both* human and Divine, yet he must be God, or he could not sustain these exalted relations to the universe. But,

5. Christ is seen to be the true God, because *all the Divine attributes are ascribed to him.*

The attributes of God, as set forth in Scripture, are: *Infinity, Eternity, Unchangeableness, Knowledge, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth.* Of these, the first three, viz.: *Infinity, Eternity and Unchangeableness*, are called by some *incommunicable* attributes, because they belong to God only. The last named are called the *communicable*, because they are shared by angels and men, *but in a limited degree.* Now, if Christ possesses the three attributes which belong, according to Scripture, to *God only*, and if, *like God*, he possesses the other seven attributes in an *infinite degree*, then is he most clearly proven to be very God.

Let us see, then, what Scripture teaches upon this important point. Let us consider the *communicable* attributes, first of all. Has Christ *knowledge*, and in an *infinite degree*? Listen to such language as this, addressed by Peter to Christ, without rebuke: "Lord, thou knowest *all* things, thou knowest that I love thee." So, too, this other language: "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, for he *knew all*

men, and needed not that any should testify of man, *for he knew what was in man.*" The manifest meaning of this is, that he had a *perfect* knowledge of all the thoughts of all souls. So that Jesus himself testifies, "All the churches shall know that I am he who searchest the reins and the hearts." Is not such knowledge *infinite*?

So, too, his is *Divine wisdom*. Christ is undoubtedly speaking, in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, when we read, "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence." "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me, findeth life." This is he of whom Paul exclaimed, in 1 Cor. i. 23, 24: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God."

Then, too, he is possessed of *omnipotence*. This is *implied* in his being the *Creator* and *upholder* of all things, in heaven and on earth. And if you wish other proof, behold it in the declaration of Christ himself: "I am he, who is, and who was, and who is to come — *the ALMIGHTY.*" Isaiah, too, calls him the "*Mighty God.*"

Then, too, he is possessed of *infinite holiness*. The Scriptures say of him that he was *HOLY, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.*" Read the record of his life — trace his every step — mark his every word — scrutinize, as closely as you may,

every thought, purpose, motive, or desire, of his whole existence on earth — and not the slightest deviation is observable, from the *strictest holiness*.

And thus we might consider the attributes of *justice, goodness, and truth*, and we could prove that he possesses them, as they lie in the bosom of God — *in an infinite degree*. In *Christ*, all these attributes are perfect. This can be affirmed neither of men nor angels.

But what of the *incommunicable attributes of God*? Do these, too, belong to Jesus of Nazareth? Then is he “very God of very God.”

Is Christ infinite? Certainly; otherwise, how could he create *all things*, and how uphold all things created? Think of the *infinite* variety in nature — the *infinite* extent of the physical universe — worlds upon worlds, rolling out and out into illimitable space. Behold, all these are created and upheld by Jesus of Nazareth. Is he not, then, infinite in his perfections? — and *as infinite, is he not God?*

Then, too, is Christ eternal? Certainly; otherwise, there would be no force in these words of the Saviour, as applied to himself: “I am Alpha and Omega, the *first* and the *last*.” What is it to be the *first*? and what to be the *last*? Then, if he is not eternal, what means this language: “And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, who is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, *from everlast-*

ing." What is it to be *from everlasting*? Is it not to be eternal?

But then, is Christ immutable, too? Certainly; else, how would we interpret the words, "Jesus Christ, *the same*, yesterday, to-day, and forever?" If he is *not immutable*, then it would be most blasphemous to apply to him the words used of him by Paul, in Hebrews: "Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; *they shall perish, but thou remainest*; they all shall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; *but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*" What can be more full, more explicit, than this?

This last argument, drawn from the Divine perfections, we regard as conclusive against all objections. If it should be conceded that Christ is possessed of all the Divine attributes, but that he possesses them only as the gift of God, and not in his own right, we ask, how is it possible, for God even, to impart *infinite* perfections to a *finite* nature? If Christ is not in and of himself God, he can not receive as a gift, an *infinite* attribute, nor possess a communicable attribute in an *infinite* degree.

We freely concede that a created, and of course *finite*, being may have bestowed upon him the gift of wondrous graces by the God who made him. But there is a limit to the bestowment of these gifts. Even if God were willing to bestow upon such a person his own incomprehensible powers, with reverence

be it said, *he could not do it*. The *limited capacity* of the *recipient* would render the attempt abortive. Every creature must be inferior to the Creator; and if inferior, of course incapable of receiving his inexhaustible fullness. But Christ, as we have seen, *possesses in full every perfection of Deity*. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The conclusion, then, and the *only* conclusion to which we can come, from all this, is that

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD.

And now the argument is complete, and may be summed up in a word. *If the Scriptures may, in truth, ascribe to Christ all Divine names and titles, all Divine acts and prerogatives, all Divine honor and worship, all Divine relationships and dignities, all Divine qualities and attributes, even to the three, infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness, which belong to God only, THEN IS JESUS CHRIST THE TRUE GOD! How can this conclusion be evaded? How can we hold otherwise, and yet admit the inspiration of the Word of God?*

We may bring this chapter to a close by reference to the remarkable fact that Christ makes the most astonishing claims, without in the least *shocking* our minds, or exciting within us a feeling of disgust at his pretensions. Says an ingenious writer, when speaking upon this point: "Imagine a human nature saying to the world, 'I came from the Father,' 'Ye are from beneath, I am from above;' facing all the intelligence and even the philosophy of the world, and saying, in bold assurance, 'Behold, a greater

than Solomon is here,' 'I am the light of the world, the way, the truth and the life;' publishing to all people and religions, 'No man cometh to the Father but by me;' promising openly in his death, 'I will draw all men unto me;' addressing the Infinite Majesty, and testifying, 'I have glorified thee on the earth;' calling to the human race, 'Come unto me,' 'Follow me;' laying his hand upon all the dearest and most intimate affections of life, and demanding a precedent love — 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Was there ever a man that dared put himself on the world in such pretensions? — as if all light was in him! as if to follow him and be worthy of him was to be the conclusive or chief excellence of mankind! But no one is offended with Jesus on this account; and, what is a sure test of his success, it is remarkable that, of all the readers of the Gospel, it probably never occurs to one in a hundred thousand, to blame his conceit or the egregious vanity of his pretensions.

"Nor is there any thing disputable in these pretensions — least of all, any trace of myth or fabulous tradition. They enter into the very web of his ministry, so that, if they are extracted, and nothing left transcending mere humanity, nothing at all is left. Indeed, there is a tacit assumption continually maintained, that far exceeds the range of these formal pretensions. He says, 'I and the Father that sent me.' What figure would a man present in such language — 'I and the Father?' He goes even beyond this; and — apparently without

any thought of excess or presumption, classing himself with the Infinite Majesty in a common plural — he says, ‘We will come unto him, and make *our* abode with him.’ Imagine any, the greatest and holiest of mankind — any prophet or apostle — saying *WE* of himself and the Great Jehovah! What a conception did he give us concerning himself, when he assumed the necessity of such information as this: ‘My Father is greater than I;’ and, above all, when he calls himself, as he often does, in a tone of condescension, ‘the Son of Man.’ See him, also, on the top of Olivet, looking down on the guilty city, and weeping words of compassion like these — imagine some man weeping over London or New York in the like — ‘How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!’ See him, also, in the Supper, instituting a rite of remembrance for himself — a scorned, outcast man — and saying, ‘This is my body — this do in remembrance of me.’

“Come, now, all ye that tell us, in your wisdom, of the mere natural humanity of Jesus, and help us to find how it is that he is only a natural development of the human; select your wisest and best character; take the range, if you will, of all the great philosophers and saints, and choose out one that is most competent; or if, perchance, some one of you may imagine that he is himself upon a level with Jesus (as we hear that some of you do,) let him come forward in this trial, and say, ‘Follow me,’ ‘Be worthy of me,’ ‘I am the light of the world,’

‘Ye are from beneath, I am from above,’ ‘Behold, a greater than Solomon is here;’ — take on all these transcendent assumptions, and see how soon your glory will be sifted out of you by the detective gaze, and darkened by the contempt of mankind! Why not? Is not the challenge fair? Do you not tell us that you can say as Divine things as he? Is it not in you, too, of course, to do what is human? Are you not in the front rank of human developments? Do you not rejoice in the power to rectify many mistakes and errors in the words of Jesus? Give us, then, this one experiment, and see if it does not prove to you a truth that is of some consequence; viz.: that you are a man, and that Jesus Christ is — more!” *

“More!” Yes, reader, he is more. He is nothing less than DIVINE; and, as such, fully able to save your soul from sin and death. Do you *know*, in your own sweet experience, that he hath “*power* on earth to forgive sins?” Stop not short of that knowledge. Pray for the discovery, if you have not yet made it, which was made by Thomas, when he cried, “MY LORD and MY GOD!”

“Where is refuge — where ?
 In Thee, Lord Christ, alone !
 For thou hast shed thy precious blood ;
 All our sins thou makest good —
 Holy Lord and God !
 Strong and holy God !
 Merciful and holy Saviour !
 Eternal God !
 Let us never fall
 From the true faith’s hope for all !
 Kyrie Eleison !”

CHAPTER XIII.

“Like as a man, He trode on earthly soil;
He bore each pang, and strove in weary toil;
He spake in human words, with pity sighed;
Like us, He mourned, and feared, and wept, and died.
Yet all thy fulness, Father, dwelt in him,
In whom no shadow made the glory dim.
Such strength, O God, from him to us derive,
And make, by life from him, our death alive.” — STERLING.

“A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” — ISAIAH liii. 3.

IT was demonstrated, in the last chapter, that Christ is *truly* God. We there saw that the Bible ascribes to him *all divine names and titles, all divine acts and prerogatives, all divine honors and worship, all divine relationships and dignities, and all divine qualities and attributes*. He, then, to whom all these can be rightfully ascribed, is, and must of necessity be, “VERY GOD OF VERY GOD,” — the true and ever-living JEHOVAH.

Now, to all this, of course, there have been raised numerous objections. Socinians and Unitarians have resorted to all manner of devices to evade the force of these Scriptural ascriptions, and to make it appear, notwithstanding all this, that Jesus can not be God.

It is not proposed, in these pages, to follow these errorists into all the by-ways of their sophistry and false logic, nor to undertake to answer all their foolish, and in many instances *puerile*, objections. There is, however, one question which has been asked by those who do not adopt the doctrine of Christ's proper divinity, which, as it is founded upon an apparent contradiction of the Word of God, may be noticed with propriety in this chapter. It has been said, and said truly, that the Scriptures, in many places, speak of Christ as *inferior to the Father*; and the honest question with many is, "How can this be *consistent* with the doctrine that Christ is an *equal* with the Father? How can the Scriptures speak of Christ as both *equal* with God, and as *inferior* to him? Admitting that this inquiry is legitimate — that there is here a question which should be answered — we enter now upon its discussion. And,

1. *Let us notice some of the passages of the Word of God, to which reference is here made.*

One is found in Isaiah xlii. 6: "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." It is readily admitted, that the reference here is to Christ, and that he is regarded in some sense inferior to the Father. God is said to have "*called*" him; he promises to "*hold*" him, and "*keep*" him, and "*give*" him; all of which are expressions denoting *superiority* on the part of the Father, and *dependence*

and *subjection* on the part of the Son. Again, in the 1st verse of the 110th Psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." Here, God the Father *commanded* the Son to sit at his right hand, and promises to do for Christ something which, at first sight, we might suppose he had not the power to do for himself—that is, to *subdue his foes*; implying, apparently, that Christ's power is inferior to the Father's. Then, in the 2d Psalm: "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." And in the 89th Psalm: "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth;"—all expressions implying the *control* of a Father, and the *submission* of a Son. And then, *similar* expressions are very numerous in the New Testament: "The living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father." (John vi. 57.) "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him." (John viii. 29.) "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John xiv. 10.) "He was crucified through weakness." (2 Cor. xiii. 4.) "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels." (Heb. ii. 9.) Then, likewise, we have those two very remarkable expressions—the first declaring that the Son is *inferior* to the Father in knowledge: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father;" and the second, in

which our Saviour *expressly declares* that the Father is greater than he. In John xiv. 28, he says: "I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I." And these quotations might be greatly multiplied. We could point to the fact that Christ *prayed* to the Father, again and again, just like any inferior creature; that he asked him to *do things* for him, as though he had *no authority, no ability*, to do them for himself; and when he hung upon the cross, he cried, in apparent helplessness, weakness and despair, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Now, we do not wonder that men have asked, "How can these texts be reconciled with the doctrine of Christ's *absolute equality* with the Father? If he were the true God, could *any* inferiority be predicated of him?" We do not wonder that such questions have arisen, nor do we blame persons for asking them. We only complain that those who have been puzzled by the *apparent* difficulty here, have not pursued the proper course to secure a removal of their doubts. It will not do to say, as many have done, "Here are passages of Scripture which *seem* to contradict Christ's proper divinity; therefore he can not be the true God." No; they should have said, "Is there not some sense in which these declarations and expressions are to be rationally interpreted, in entire consistency with those other portions which teach Christ's divinity?" In reading the Scriptures, we will often find passages which *appear* to be in conflict. For instance, Solomon says, in one place, "Answer not a fool accord-

ing to his folly;" and in the very next verse, says, "Answer a fool according to his folly." Now, no sane man would assert that Solomon here contradicts himself. There *is* a sense in which we are *not* to answer a fool according to his folly—lest we place ourselves on an equality with him, and become like him. There is also a sense in which we *are* to answer a fool according to his folly—for words of *true* wisdom would be thrown away upon such. When, too, Paul says, We are justified by faith only, and James says, We see, then, that a man is justified, not by faith only, but by works also, we do not hastily conclude that there is an irreconcilable antagonism between these two inspired penmen. We investigate the matter, and find that they may be made to harmonize perfectly. They may speak of different *kinds* of faith, or of different *kinds* of justification. *Paul* may speak of *genuine* faith—*James* of that which is *spurious*. Or, *Paul* may speak of justification *before God*, who knows the heart—and *James* of a justification *before men*, who can judge of the sincerity of the heart *only* by the acts of the outward life. With this view of the case, we perceive that there is no contradiction between James and Paul. In the way in which they are viewing *faith* at the time, or in the sense in which they use the word *justification*, they both utter the truth, and are seen to be in entire accord, notwithstanding their *apparent* antagonism.

Now, when, as we discovered in the last chapter, the Scriptures speak of Christ as the TRUE GOD—

and when we see as in the quotations just now made, they speak of him as subject to and dependent upon the Father — we do not conclude rashly, with the Unitarian and Socinian, that there is here an irreconcilable antagonism, and that Christ can not be God ; but our conclusion is that there is *some way* in which these *apparent* contradictions are reasonably *accounted for*.

To remove, therefore, *all difficulties* upon this subject, let it be considered that Christ is represented in Scripture —

1. *As having taken into union with his Divine, a perfect human nature, a soul and a body precisely like that of man, having all man's wants and weaknesses ; in short, a nature like man's, in every respect, with the exception that it is sinless.* Now, a large number of the passages of Scripture which imply inferiority in Christ to God the Father, relate *exclusively to his human nature*, which was *created*, and, of course, inferior and dependent. Thus, if it is asked — How could Christ, if the true God, experience such agony in the Garden of Gethsemane ? — we give the *perfectly* satisfactory reply, by saying that it was his *human nature* which then suffered. If it is asked — How could a God weep as Christ wept at the grave of Lazarus, or be weary as he was on his journey through Palestine, or be hungry, or thirsty, or suffer pain, or be compelled to cry upon the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” — we reply that we see here, *not* the sufferings of the *Divine* nature, but of the *human* ; these are not the

agonies of a *God*, but of the *man* Christ Jesus. And to every dispassionate mind, this view of the subject will account satisfactorily for a very large number of passages in the Word of God, which might otherwise present insurmountable difficulties. If Christ is ever said to be *ignorant* of any thing—if he is ever said to know less than the Father, as in the instance already quoted, touching the coming of a future event—if he is ever said to want power to do any thing of himself, wherein any inferiority to the Father may be implied—you may be assured that it is all said of the *human* nature, the *inferior* and *created* nature, which Christ assumed for the purpose of making atonement for a lost and ruined race. As *God*, he is in all respects, and always represented as, *equal* with the Father. As *man*, he has all the infirmities of humanity; *and those portions of the Scriptures which relate to his human nature, must of necessity speak of him in terms differing from those which detail the glories of his Deity.* Is there any thing incomprehensible in this? Is it not clear, to every dispassionate mind, that all those passages of Scripture which speak of Christ's *humanity* must speak of him as *inferior* to the Father—as *subordinate*? When, then, we meet with a text which implies the inferiority of his *human* nature, what madness to infer from it that Christ is not Divine! But, more than this, we remark—

2. *That the Scriptures represent Christ as acting in certain OFFICIAL relations to the Godhead, in which*

he is, for the time being, regarded as subject to the Father, and under his direction.

Take that passage in which God the Father says of Christ, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," and all those passages in which Christ is represented as being *sent* into the world by the Father, to do *his* work, to accomplish *his* purposes, and fulfill *his* commands. In all these, Christ is represented as acting in an *official* relation. This idea is prominent in that wonderful prayer of our Saviour, recorded in the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, where he says, among other things, addressing the Father: "I have glorified thee on the earth; *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*; and now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which *thou* gavest me out of the world; *thine* they were, and *thou* gavest them me." And scores of passages might be quoted, like these, showing two things: 1st, That Christ is recognized as sustaining a relation which brings him under the *direction* and *authority* of the Father; and, 2d, That this relation is *official*, and does not affect his Supreme Deity.

To make this matter plain, let us employ the following illustration: Two persons may be upon an absolute equality in all the essentials of their being; they may be equal in knowledge, learning, skill, and genius — equal in age, in social position and wealth; yet one of them may consent, for a time and for a purpose, to take an *official* position, which will bring

him temporarily under the direction of the other. Of this, you can easily conceive. Thus, in *every thing* which relates to character, and attributes, and position in society, there is equality, absolute and perfect; but as respects *office*, and certain self-assumed *functions*, there is a temporary subjection. Take, for further illustration, the Secretary of State and the President of the United States. *As persons*, there may be here absolute equality; but for the purposes of government, the Secretary becomes, *for the time*, subject to the Executive direction. No one for a moment infers any inferiority in character and attributes, because the Secretary is *officially* under the control of the President, for a time. *So in the Godhead*. Christ *as Divine*, and as to all the essentials of the Deity, is the equal of the Father — is indeed *one* with him; but, for the great purposes of Redemption, he has assumed, for a time, an official relation to the Godhead, which subjects him to the Father's control.

But, you are ready to inquire, does the Bible clearly reveal this fact? Is it distinctly stated that Christ *has* assumed this official relation, in which he is *subject* to the Father, fully authorizing us *so* to speak of him? We answer, yes. Daniel, in the wonderful visions granted to him, makes this record: "I saw in the night, visions; and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and

nations, and languages, should serve him." (Dan. vii. 13, 14.) There is no mistaking the import of this vision. The "Ancient of Days" is God the Father; the one like the Son of Man, is Christ; and the *giving to him of a kingdom and dominion*, is his appointment to the official position of head over his *mediatorial kingdom on earth*. Hence, Christ himself says: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father;" and "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." It is in this sense, too, that he speaks of his kingdom, saying, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and it was on this ground that he allowed Pilate to call him "King of the Jews," and write the superscription which was placed above him upon the cross, "This is the King of the Jews." It is clear, then, that all these passages and expressions point to an *official* relation sustained by Jesus to the Godhead, which is to be temporary. When the present state of things has ended — when God has wrought out his full purposes of love and mercy towards a ruined race — when Christ shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied — when the ruin wrought in Paradise has been rectified in the application of the great remedy brought to earth and manifested in Palestine — when the *stains*, the *guilt*, the *curse*, of Eden, have been purged away in that fountain opened in Gethsemane and filled to overflowing upon Calvary — then will Christ's *official* and *subordinate* relations to the Godhead cease. His mediatorial kingship will end, and he will be in

nothing, and no longer, inferior to the Father. All this is beautifully and concisely expressed by the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the resurrection and general judgment: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." Christ's *official* relations to the Godhead ceasing with the fulfillment of his great mediatorial work, he delivers up the kingdom to the Father, and is no longer officially subordinate.

It is, then, a *fact*, that Christ had a human body and a human soul, *created*, and, of course, *dependent*. It is also a *fact* that, as *Mediator*, he sustains an *official* relation to the Godhead, which, for the time, renders him, in all the matters pertaining to his office, subject to the Father. Yet it is clear that neither of these things in the least *affects* his *essential Deity*, or for one moment *dims* our perception of his *true Divinity*. Nay, it is only by a full recognition and admission of all these things, that we can interpret Scripture. How else could we read intelligently that wondrous declaration of Isaiah, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth,

even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." There is certainly both a *human* and a *Divine* nature implied here. The "child born and the Son given," surely indicate the *human*; the "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," can designate only a *Divine* being. How will Socinians explain this language? To whom, of all the beings who ever appeared on earth, can this language apply, if not to Christ? Who else, of all who have ever lived, can be said to be at once a "CHILD BORN," and the "MIGHTY GOD AND EVERLASTING FATHER?"

Then again, it is only upon the admission of the doctrine for which we here contend, that we can explain those many passages of Scripture which speak of Christ as having an existence *prior* to his appearance in the world. These have always proved difficult portions of Scripture to Unitarians. Thus, in Hebrews, 10th chapter, Paul, in arguing the great efficacy of Christ's atonement, says, in the fifth and succeeding verses: "Wherefore, *when he cometh into the world*, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, *but a body hast thou prepared me*. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sins, thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, *I come* [in the volume of the book it is written *of me*] to do thy will, O God." Here Christ's existence *before* coming into the world is clearly implied. "*When he cometh into the world*" — "*a body hast thou prepared me*" — "*Lo, I come* to do thy will," etc. Now, since he existed *before* appearing in the flesh, *how did he*

exist? As *man?* No; even this, Unitarians would not assert. As an angel? No; this would be equally inadmissible. There is, then, but one other mode of being—the *Divine*. Christ, then, *did* exist as a *Divine being*, prior to his birth in Bethlehem. But these words teach that a *body was prepared* for him; that is, *he took upon him* the human nature—just as John informs us “*The Word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” and as Paul elsewhere affirms, “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *he also, himself, likewise took part of the same*, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil.” “For verily, he took not on him the nature of angels; *but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*” Let the dispassionate reader carefully examine this language. “He *took not on him* the nature of angels,” and “*he took on him* the seed of Abraham.” What can be more significant than this? A person previously existing—the “*logos*,” the *Word*—*takes* to himself a *body*, for a specific purpose; “he is made *flesh*.” He thus, while *in the flesh*, and as to his human nature, and in the fulfillment of his purpose, is *subordinate* to the Father; though in his Divine nature, he is his *equal*. Surely, this is the only rational explanation of these otherwise incomprehensible portions of Scripture.

And this explanation involves no contradictions, no absurdities. That Christ may be in *one* sense an equal with the Father, and in *another* sense inferior to him, can not be denied. It is only when it is

alleged that he is at once, and *in the same sense*, his *equal* and his *subordinate*, that the absurdity appears. But this is never affirmed. He is the equal of the Father in *one* capacity, and inferior to him in *another*; and in this, there is *neither* contradiction *nor* absurdity.

The practical bearings of the question here raised, are of the most important character. There are times in the religious history of the human soul, when nothing but the view of Christ *as a man*, will satisfy. When the sinner is bowed down under a burden of guilt, and he realizes the need of some one to sympathize with him, to enter into his feelings, and take part with him in his great sorrow, then he can look to Jesus as a *perfect man*, able and willing to bear a part of his afflictions—to soothe him in his sadness, instead of driving him in sternness and severity away. Nothing, at such times, will comfort the bowed soul, but a view of the “*man of sorrows*.” Then, the *human* view of Christ’s character becomes the only ground of relief. So, too, is it oftentimes with the child of God. When tempted almost beyond endurance, when the crushing weight of heavy trials rests upon him, he loves to go to him who was tempted in all points like this. At such times, the bosom of the *man Christ Jesus* becomes the pillow upon which the Christian can lay his aching head, and find rest.

Then, on the other hand, when the awakened sinner gains a view, as he surely will at some point in his experience, of the majesty and glory of the

Divine law — when the great and overwhelming thought rushes in upon his soul, that that law is *holy*, and that its *infinitely* righteous claims have been by him violated — when he sees, as see he will, that he rests under an *infinite* guilt, and is exposed to an *infinite* punishment — then will he realize that he needs an *infinite* arm to rescue him from his peril. At such times, it is not “*the MAN Christ Jesus*” to whom he will look, but to “*the LORD from heaven.*” Then will he feel that for him nought will avail but the deliverance to be wrought by an ALMIGHTY power; and he will fly to the arms of Jesus, with the cry of the believing Thomas, “*My Lord and my God.*”

It will, we think, be safe to say that no man has ever had a genuine Christian experience, who has not found this *twofold* view of Christ's nature needful to his comfort; and equally safe to say that it is only those who have never had a true Christian experience, who deny to Christ the possession of this twofold nature. Those alone who have never known *illness*, will deny the efficacy of remedial agents. Those who have never known the pinchings of poverty, can alone deny to an easy competence the satisfaction which it brings.

Reader, have you felt the need of a *sympathizing Saviour*? You will not, then, deny Christ's *humanity*. Have you felt your need of an *Almighty deliverer*? You will not, then, deny Christ's *Divinity*. In your sorrows, have you beheld him a MAN? In your weakness, impotency, and guilt, have you seen

him a God? As GOD-MAN, has your soul rested upon him, and found peace? Remember that it is only in this twofold nature that he can be the Saviour of your soul. He must make himself known to you as the "MAN of Sorrows," and as the "LORD from heaven." You must realize, under a discovery of your own spiritual wants, that "it behooved HIM to be made LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN," "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;" and that he is yet and ever "the TRUE GOD and ETERNAL LIFE." This is what Paul appropriately terms, "The mystery of Godliness. GOD manifest in the FLESH." This is the solution of Isaiah's wondrous utterance, "Unto us a CHILD is born; unto us a SON is given; and his name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, The MIGHTY GOD, The EVERLASTING FATHER, The PRINCE OF PEACE." A "CHILD born," a "SON given," and yet "The MIGHTY GOD. The EVERLASTING FATHER."

Take him, reader, in the arms of your faith, as a MAN, your "ELDER BROTHER," sympathizing in all your sins and sorrows; and as a God, "MIGHTY TO SAVE."

CHAPTER XIV.

“A sinless God, for sinful men
Descends to suffer and to bleed;
Hell must renounce its empire, then;
The price is paid, the world is freed;
And Satan’s self must now confess
That Christ has earned the right to bless.”—BRONTE.

“What think ye of Christ?” — MATT. xxii. 42.

WE have examined, in the last two chapters, the important doctrine of *Christ’s Divinity*. We have also seen in what sense Jesus is represented in Scripture as being *inferior* to the Father. This investigation has clearly revealed the fact that Christ, in his essential being, is truly God, whilst as to his *human nature*, and in his *official* or *mediatorial* capacity, he is *subject* to the Father. For a time and for a purpose, Christ acts for the Godhead, in the great work of redemption; and while so acting, he is made, by his own consent, *subject* to the Father’s will. In all the *essentials* of his being, then, he *was* ever, *is* ever, and *continues* ever to be, the TRUE and LIVING GOD; though, for a specific

purpose, and for a time, he consents to act in a capacity *subordinate* to the Father.

Having thus disposed satisfactorily of these questions, the way might be regarded as open for the discussion of some one of the many other great doctrines of the Word of God, which demand attention. It is important, however, before leaving the subject of Christ's Divinity, that we consider, in connection with it, one remarkable fact, demonstrated in the history of the world. *We refer to the astonishing unwillingness of the great mass of mankind, even in Christian lands, to accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour of a lost world.* It is a melancholy truth that, whilst nearly *all*, in every community, *readily admit* the existence of *God the Father*, few, except those who are professing Christians, are found, who acknowledge *Jesus Christ the Son of God*. Let the question be asked of a non-professor, "Do you believe in *God*?" and the response will be prompt and decided, "Most certainly." Let the question, however, be, "Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Divine Saviour of a lost world?" and you will receive either a slow and hesitating response in the affirmative, or an absolute denial.

The fact to which we now allude is very clearly exhibited in the conduct of the *world's rulers*, her *kings, emperors, governors, presidents, senators, statesmen, generals*, and *diplomats*. How ready all are to own *God the Father*, but how few ever recognize *Christ as God*, and *honor* him as such? Can there

be any good reason assigned for this remarkable fact? If Jesus were nothing *in himself* — if he were nothing *to the world*, if he *had* done nothing for man, if he were *now* doing nothing, if he *were* to be nothing to us, and to do nothing for us during eternity — then could we see a reason for this widespread indifference. But when we reflect that the Bible declares Christ to be the “true God,” the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” — when we know that he became flesh and dwelt among us, in order that he might redeem the world from sin — when we remember all the wondrous details of his history, his birth, his miracles, his teachings, his example, his death, his resurrection, his ascension — when we consider how he is at present employed, pleading at the right hand of God the Father, for a world steeped in sin — when we remember that we are not done with him, that he is to *come again*, in the clouds of heaven, when *every* eye shall see him — that he is to sit upon the throne of eternal judgment, and call before him every soul that *has* lived, that *now* lives, or that *shall* live, and that from *his* lips shall fall the words which shall seal the doom of every human being, to all eternity — when we think of all this, is it not wonderful, amazing, past comprehension, that his *very existence* should be ignored — that he should be ruled out of the world which he has made, and that, so far as they can do it, men should *banish* from their minds “the name which *is above every name*?” Is it not strange that he whose relations to earth are so intimate, so touching, so

beneficent, so constant — whose whole life was one grand charity — whose every pulse-beat, whose every heart-throb, whose every footstep, whose every tear, and groan, and pang, *was for man* — is it not strange that he who lived, and toiled, and died, for man, should be treated by man with neglect — yea, *worse*, with *hatred*, with *contempt*, and with *scorn*?

We can well conceive of the world's treating its *tyrants* and *oppressors* thus. We wonder not that Rome should blush at the mention of her Cataline, or her Nero, and seek to blot their names from the memory of future generations. We wonder not that Scotland shudders at the name of Claverhouse, and that America disowns her Arnold with loathing. But why should Rome forget her Brutus and her Cassius? Why should Scotland cease to honor her Wallace and her Knox? And why should America pour contempt and scorn upon her Washington and Franklin? But higher than all earth's mightiest and best, than her most warmly cherished and most deeply loved, than those to whom she *freely* accords the loftiest meed of praise and the most enduring testimonials of affection, stands the HOLY ONE, whom she foully persecuted while living, whom she basely murdered, and upon whom she this day heaps her dishonorable neglect, her shameless ingratitude, and her bitter scorn.

While this is true of the great mass of mankind, there yet have been those who, although not distinguished for their piety, have, nevertheless, seen and confessed the true character of Christ. Remarkable

among these confessions, is that of Napoleon Bonaparte, made to General Bertrand, upon the Island of St. Helena. As the opinion of this most gifted man is so clear and forcible, and is presented with all that native eloquence and power for which he was distinguished, we give it entire. Said Napoleon, on a certain occasion, addressing General Bertrand :

“ I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religion, the distance of infinity.

“ We can say to the authors of every other religion, You are neither gods nor the agents of Deity. You are but missionaries of falsehood, moulded from the same clay with the rest of mortals. You are made with all the passions and vices inseparable from them. Your temples and your priests proclaim your origin. Such will be the judgment, the cry of conscience, of whoever examines the gods and the temples of paganism.

“ Paganism was never accepted as truth by the wise men of Greece, neither by Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras, or Pericles. But, on the other side, the loftiest intellects since the advent of Christianity, have had faith, a living faith, a practical faith, in the mysteries and the doctrines of the Gospel ; not only Bossuet and Fenelon, who were preachers,

but Descartes and Newton, Liebnitz and Pascal, Corneille and Racine, Charlemagne and Louis XIV.

"Paganism is the work of man. One can here read but our imbecility. What do these gods, so boastful, know more than other mortals? these legislators, Greek or Roman? this Numa, this Lycurgus? these priests of India or of Memphis? this Confucius? this Mohammed? Absolutely nothing. They have made a perfect chaos of morals. There is not one among them all who has said any thing new in reference to our future destiny, to the soul, to the essence of God, to the creation. Enter the sanctuaries of Paganism; you find there perfect chaos — a thousand contradictions, war between the gods, the immobility of sculpture, the division and the rending of unity, the parcelling out of the Divine attributes, mutilated or denied in their essence, the sophisms of ignorance and presumption, polluted *fetes*, impurity and abomination adored, all sorts of corruption festering in the thick shades, with the rotten wood, the idol, and his priest. Does this honor God, or does it dishonor him? Are these religions and these gods to be compared with Christianity?

"As for me, I say no. I summon entire Olympus to my tribunal. I judge the gods, but am far from prostrating myself before their vain images. The gods, the legislators of India and of China, of Rome and of Athens, have nothing which can overawe me. Not that I am unjust to them; no, I appreciate them, because I know their value. Undeniably, princes whose existence is fixed in the memory as an

image of order and of power, as the ideal of force and beauty — such princes were no ordinary men.

“I see in Lyeurgus, Numa and Mohammed, only legislators, who, having the first rank in the state, have sought the best solution of the social problem; but I see nothing there which reveals Divinity. They themselves have never raised their pretensions so high. As for me, I recognize the gods and these great men as beings like myself. They have performed a lofty part in their times, as I have done. Nothing announces them Divine. On the contrary, there are numerous resemblances between them and myself — foibles and errors, which ally them to me and to humanity.

“It is not so with Christ. Every thing in him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by himself. His ideas and his sentiments, the truths which he announces, his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things.

“His birth, and the history of his life; the profundity of his doctrine, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is, of those difficulties, the most admirable solution; his Gospel; his apparition; his empire; his march across the ages and the realms; every thing is for me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into a reverie from which I can not escape; a mystery which is there before my eyes;

a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human.

"The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, every thing is above me, every thing remains grand — of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man. There is there a profound originality, which has created a series of words and of maxims before unknown. Jesus borrowed nothing from our sciences. One can absolutely find no where, but in him alone, the imitation or the example of his life. He is not a philosopher, since he advances by miracles; and, from the commencement, his disciples worshiped him. He persuades them far more by an appeal to the heart, than by any display of method and of logic. Neither did he impose upon them any preliminary studies, or any knowledge of letters. All his religion consists in *believing*.

"In fact, the sciences and philosophy avail nothing for salvation; and Jesus came into the world to reveal the mysteries of heaven and the laws of the Spirit. Also, he has nothing to do but with the soul; and to that alone he brings his Gospel. The soul is sufficient for him, as he is sufficient for the soul. Before him, the soul was nothing. Matter and time were the masters of the world. At his voice, every thing returns to order. Science and philosophy become secondary. The soul has reconquered its sovereignty. All the scholastic scaffolding falls, as an edifice ruined, before one single word — *faith*.

“What a master and what a word, which can effect such a revolution! With what authority does he teach men to pray! He imposes his belief, and no one, thus far, has been able to contradict him; first, because the Gospel contains the purest morality; and also because the doctrine which it contains, of obscurity, is only the proclamation and the truth of that which exists where no eye can see and no reason can penetrate. Who is the insensate who will say *no* to the intrepid voyager who recounts the marvels of the icy peaks which he alone has had the boldness to visit? Christ is that bold voyager. One can doubtless remain incredulous, but no one can venture to say *it is not so*.

“Moreover, consult the philosophers upon those mysterious questions which relate to the essence of man and to the essence of religion. What is their response? Where is the man of good sense who has ever learned any thing from the system of metaphysics, ancient or modern, which is not truly a vain and pompous ideology, without any connection with our domestic life, with our passions? Unquestionably, with skill in thinking, one can seize the key of the philosophy of Socrates and Plato; but to do this, it is necessary to be a metaphysician; and moreover, with years of study, one must possess special aptitude. But good sense alone, the heart, an honest spirit, are sufficient to comprehend Christianity.

“The Christian religion is neither ideology nor metaphysics, but a practical rule which directs the

actions of man, corrects him, counsels him, and assists him in all his conduct. The Bible contains a complete series of facts and of historical men, to explain time and eternity; such as no other religion has to offer. If this is not the true religion, one is very excusable in being deceived, for every thing in it is grand and worthy of God. I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or any thing which can approach the Gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, can offer me any thing with which I am able to compare it, or explain it. Here, every thing is extraordinary. The more I consider the Gospel, the more I am assured that there is nothing there which is not beyond the march of events, and above the human mind. Even the impious themselves have never dared to deny the sublimity of the Gospel, which inspires them with a sort of compulsory veneration. What happiness that book procures for them who believe it! What marvels those admire there who reflect upon it! Book unique, where the mind finds a moral beauty before unknown, and an idea of the Supreme, superior even to that which creation suggests! Who but God could produce that type, that ideal of perfection, equally exclusive and original?

“Christ, having but a few weak disciples, was condemned to death. He died, the object of the wrath of the Jewish priests, and of the contempt of the nation, and abandoned and denied by his own disciples.

“ ‘They are about to take me, and to crucify me,’ said he. ‘I shall be abandoned of all the world. My chief disciple will deny me at the commencement of my punishment. I shall be left to the wicked. But then, Divine justice being satisfied, original sin being expiated by my sufferings, the bond of man to God will be renewed, and my death will be the life of my disciples. Then they will be more strong without me than with me, for they will see me rise again. I shall ascend to the skies, and I shall send to them from heaven a Spirit who will instruct them. The spirit of the cross will enable them to understand my Gospel. In fine, they will believe it, they will preach it, and they will convert the world.’

“And this strange promise, so aptly called by Paul the ‘foolishness of the cross,’ this prediction of one miserably crucified, is literally accomplished; and the mode of the accomplishment is perhaps more prodigious than the promise.

“It is not a day, nor a battle, which has decided it. Is it the life-time of a man? No! It is a war, a long combat of three hundred years, commenced by the Apostles, and continued by their successors and by succeeding generations of Christians. In this conflict, all the kings and all the forces of the earth were arrayed on one side. Upon the other, I see no army, but a mysterious energy, individuals scattered here and there in all parts of the globe, having no other rallying sign than a common faith in the mysteries of the cross.

“What a mysterious symbol! the instrument of

the punishment of the man-God ! His disciples were armed with it. 'The Christ,' they said ; 'God has died for the salvation of men.' What a strife, what a tempest, these simple words have raised around the humble standard of the sufferings of the man-God ! On the one side we see rage, and all the furies of hatred and violence ; on the other, there is gentleness, moral courage, infinite resignation. For three hundred years, spirit struggled against the brutality of sense, the conscience against despotism, the soul against the body, virtue against all the vices. The blood of Christians flowed in torrents. They died, kissing the hand which slew them. The soul alone protested, while the body surrendered itself to all tortures. Every where Christians fell, and every where they triumphed.

"You speak of Cæsar, of Alexander, of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm they enkindled in the hearts of their soldiers ; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests, with an army faithful and entirely devoted to his memory ? My armies have forgotten me, even while living, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. Such is our power ! A single battle lost crushes us, and adversity scatters our friends.

"Can you conceive of Cæsar, the eternal emperor of the Roman Senate, and from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome ? Such is the history of the invasion and conquest of the world by Christianity. Such is the power of the God of the Christians, and

such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of the faith and of the government of his Church. Nations pass away, thrones crumble, but the Church remains. What is then the power which has protected this Church, thus assailed by the furious billows of rage and the hostility of ages? Where is the arm which, for eighteen hundred years, has protected the Church from so many storms which have threatened to engulf it?

“In every other existence but that of Christ, how many imperfections! Where is the character which has not yielded, vanquished by obstacles? Where is the individual who has never been governed by circumstances or places, who has never succumbed to the influence of the times, who has never compounded with any customs or passions? From the first day to the last, he is the same, always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely firm and infinitely gentle.

“Truth should embrace the universe. Such is Christianity, the only religion which destroys sectional prejudice, the only one which proclaims the unity and the absolute brotherhood of the whole human family, the only one which is purely spiritual — in fine, the only one which assigns to all, without distinction, for a true country, the bosom of the Creator, God. Christ proved that he was the Son of the Eternal, by his disregard of *time*. All his doctrines signify one only and the same thing — *Eternity*.

“It is true that Christ proposed to our faith a

series of mysteries. He commands, with authority, that we should believe them, giving no other reason than those tremendous words: '*I am God.*' He declares it. What an abyss he creates, by that declaration, between himself and all the fabricators of religion! What audacity, what sacrilege, what blasphemy, if it were not true! I say more: the universal triumph of an affirmation of that kind, if the triumph were not really that of God himself, would be a plausible excuse and a reason for atheism.

"Moreover, in propounding mysteries, Christ is harmonious with Nature, which is profoundly mysterious. From whence do I come? whither do I go? who am I? Human life is a mystery, in its origin, its organization, and its end. In man and out of man, in nature, every thing is mysterious. And can one wish that religion should not be mysterious? The creation and the destiny of the world are an unfathomable abyss, as also is the creation and the destiny of each individual. Christianity, at least, does not evade these great questions. It meets them boldly. And our doctrines are a solution of them, for every one who believes.

"The Gospel possesses a secret virtue, a mysterious efficacy, a warmth which penetrates and soothes the heart. One finds, in meditating upon it, that which one experiences in contemplating the heavens. The Gospel is not a book; it is a living being, with an action, a power, which invades every thing that opposes its extension. Behold it upon this table, this book surpassing all others," (here the Emperor

solemnly placed his hand upon it); "I never omit to read it, and every day with the same pleasure.

"No where is to be found such a series of beautiful ideas, admirable moral maxims, which defile like the battalions of a celestial army, and which produce in our soul the same emotion which one experiences in contemplating the infinite expanse of the skies, resplendent in a summer's night with all the brilliance of the stars. Not only is our mind absorbed, it is controlled, and the soul can never go astray with this book for its guide. Once master of our spirit, the faithful Gospel loves us. God even is our friend, our father, and truly our God. The mother has no greater care for the infant whom she nurses.

"What a proof of the divinity of Christ! With an empire so absolute, he has but one single end, the spiritual melioration of individuals, the purity of conscience, the union to that which is true, the holiness of the soul.

"Christ speaks, and at once generations become his by stricter, closer ties than those of blood — by the most sacred, the most indissoluble of all unions. He lights up the flames of a love which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love. The founders of other religions never conceived of this mystical love, which is the essence of Christianity, and is beautifully called charity. In every attempt to effect this thing, namely, *to make himself beloved*, man deeply feels his own impotence. So that Christ's greatest miracle undoubtedly is the reign of charity.

"I have so inspired multitudes that they would die for me. God forbid that I should form any comparison between the enthusiasm of the soldier, and Christian charity, which are as unlike as their cause. But, after all, my presence was necessary; the lightning of my eye, my voice, a word from me, then the sacred fire was kindled in their hearts. I do, indeed, possess the secret of this magical power, which lifts the soul, but I could never impart it to any one. None of my generals ever learned it from me; nor have I the means of perpetuating my name, and love for me, in the hearts of men, and to effect these things without physical means.

"Now that I am at St. Helena, now that I am alone, chained upon this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? who are the courtiers of my misfortune? who thinks of me? who makes efforts for me in Europe? Where are my friends? Yes, two or three, whom your fidelity immortalizes, you share, you console my exile."

Here the voice of the emperor trembled with emotion, and for a moment he was silent. He then continued:

"Yes, our life once shone with all the brilliance of the diadem and the throne; and yours, Bertrand, reflected that splendor, as the dome of the Invalides, gilt by us, reflects the rays of the sun. But disasters came; the gold gradually became dim. The ruin of misfortune and outrage, with which I am daily deluged has effaced all the brightness. We

are mere lead now, General Bertrand, and soon I shall be in my grave.

“Such is the fate of great men! So it was with Cæsar and Alexander. And I, too, am forgotten. And the name of a conqueror and an emperor is a college theme! Our exploits are tasks given to pupils by their tutor, who sit in judgment upon us, awarding censure or praise. And mark what is soon to become of me! assassinated by the English oligarchy, I die before my time; and my dead body, too, must return to the earth, to become food for worms. Behold the destiny, near at hand, of him who has been called the great Napoleon! What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal reign of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth! Is this to die? Is it not rather to live? The death of Christ! It is the death of God.”

For a moment the Emperor was silent. As General Bertrand made no reply, he solemnly added, “If you do not perceive that Jesus Christ is God, very well, then I did wrong to make you a general.”

Reader, do you say, “This is, after all, only the opinion of a man?” True; but how valuable, as the opinion of one of the most profound minds which has ever appeared on earth! It is evident that this conclusion was not hastily reached. The whole process of this argument shows study and research. Napoleon had evidently investigated this vital point with the utmost care; and his conclusion is, that *Christ is God*. We ask you not to accede to

this conclusion because any man, however great, has reached it, but we ask *you to investigate, prayerfully and dispassionately*, fully believing that you need to know Christ *as God* before you will trust him as your Saviour. You will not look to him with that implicit confidence needful to your soul's salvation, until you have seen him by the eye of faith,

“THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE.” 1

CHAPTER XV.

“He to his own a Comforter will send
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His spirit within them, and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth.”—MILTON.

“When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”—JOHN xvi. 13.

WE are brought, in the progress of this discussion, to the consideration of the character and work of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity. Of course those who deny the tri-personality of the Godhead, bring numerous objections against the views we are now to advocate. They deny that there is such a person as the Holy Spirit. They erroneously affirm that what the Scriptures term “the Holy Spirit,” “the Holy Ghost,” “the Comforter,” is not a *person*, but merely an *attribute* of the Father, or an *influence* which goes out from him, to exert its power upon the minds and hearts of men. This, then, being the principal objection we have to meet in this connection, we ask the reader to consider, in the light of Scripture, its utter fallacy.

The *first* question to be considered, is this : *Do the Scriptures clearly teach the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit ?—that he is as really a person in the Godhead as the Father or the Son ?*

In answering this question, we must confine ourselves to the presentation of a *few only* of the *many* texts which might be cited in proof ; but the reader will find those we shall quote to be entirely conclusive.

Let us, then, first of all, consider that remarkable declaration of our Saviour, found in the 16th chapter of John's Gospel, commencing with the 7th verse : "Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. *Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.* For he shall not *speak* of himself, but whatsoever he shall *hear*, that shall he speak ; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Now we ask any candid person, is this such language as Christ would have used if he were speaking simply of an *attribute*, or quality of the Father ? See the personal pronoun

as employed all through this quotation. "*He* will come," "*he* will reprove," "*he* will speak," "*he* will guide," "*he* will hear," etc. It is utterly impossible to suppose that Christ would have employed such language if the Spirit were only an attribute. If he is not here designating a *person*, then is language impotent to do it.

But again, in John xv. 26, we have a proof equally emphatic: "When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." Now, if this were not a *person*, how easy it would have been for Christ to have said, "it shall testify of me." Had this "Comforter," this "Spirit of Truth," been nothing *more* than an influence flowing forth from the Father, our Saviour would have used, without question, language which could not be misunderstood. And this view is still further strengthened by the almost countless declarations of the inspired Apostles. Hear Paul: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; *but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit SEARCHETH all things, yea, the deep things of God.*" Now, what idea can you form of one of God's attributes or graces, "*searching the deep things of God?*" Unless we admit that the Spirit is a person, it will be perceived at once that the Apostle here is made to utter nonsense.

So, too, we ask you to consider those remarkable

words of Paul, in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; *but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which can not be uttered.* And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the *mind* of the Spirit, because he maketh *intercession* for the saints, according to the will of God." This is entirely clear, and well nigh conclusive. Though we might say that one of God's attributes could help our infirmities, and so enlighten us that we would pray for such things as we ought; *still*, it would be an utter perversion of language to say that an attribute could *pray* for us, could *intercede* for us with groanings, or could have a *mind* whose operations could be known to God. Yet this is just what is here affirmed. This person *prays*, he *intercedes* with the Father, and a *mind*, and *mental* powers and operations are ascribed to him. "Who hath known the *mind* of the Spirit?" Is not this, then, something more than a Divine *attribute*, a *grace*, a *power*, an *influence*? Is it not *verily* a *person* — the *third person* in the Godhead?

But still further; consider what Peter says to Ananias and Sapphira, who, it will be remembered, were guilty of the grossest duplicity and falsehood, for which they forfeited their lives. The language is found in the 5th chapter of the Acts, and is as follows: "But Peter said, Ananias! why hath Satan filled thine heart *to lie to the Holy Ghost*, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While i

remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto *men*, but unto *God*." Can it be possible that Peter here charges Ananias with *lying* to one of God's attributes? When he says, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart *to lie to the Holy Ghost?*" what does he mean? Will not every candid reader say at once, the only rational construction to be placed upon these words is, that Ananias had lied to a *person*; had *sinned*, in other words, against the third person in the Holy Trinity? This view is confirmed by those familiar injunctions, "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,*" and "*Quench not the Spirit,*" and also by that remarkable language of Christ (Matt. xii. 31, 32), "Wherefore, I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come."

Now, whatever difficulty we may have in determining what constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost, we have *no* difficulty in perceiving that there *is* such a sin. It is here called "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." Certainly, no one will be so reckless as to affirm that one can *blaspheme* against an *influence*, or an *attribute*. To assert this, would

justly subject one's self to ridicule. Then, too, it is termed *speaking against the Holy Ghost*, and is contrasted with speaking against Christ. Who does not see that the only natural construction to be placed upon these words, is that the *Holy Ghost, like Christ*, is a person, against whom sinners can *blaspheme*; in *reference* to whom they can use such *desperately* wicked language that forgiveness is denied them? Certainly, every candid man, in reading these words, will say this is the only fair construction to put upon them.

And now, we detain the reader upon this part of the subject only while we call attention to two other passages. The one is the great commission of Christ to his Apostles: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And the other is the Apostolic benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." What violence would be done to our better judgments if we were told that the first and second persons here named were truly *personal* existences, but that the third, *named just as the others*, is only an *influence*; a *property*; a *grace*; a *quality*? Who can believe this? What nonsense, to assert that Christ sent forth his Apostles to preach under a commission, in which God the Father, and God the Son, are named in connection with a *something* else, which is only an *attribute* or *quality* of the Father? And what nonsense to assert that in the formula for the

solemnization of baptism, we are enjoined to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *which last* is only an *attribute* of the Father ! We are *amazed* at the infatuation which would so pervert the Scriptures. We must be on our guard against it. The *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, are manifestly three distinct personalities in the one Godhead. Each one is "God of very God." *Each* is to be *honored*, *loved*, *revered*, and *served*, as the other two ; and it is only when so doing that we demonstrate an intelligent conception of revelation.

Having now seen that the Holy Spirit is indeed a *person of the Godhead*, and not a mere *attribute*, *quality*, or *property* of Deity, we turn to consider,

II. *The agency of the Spirit in the affairs of earth.* And here we enter upon a great theme, which can only be very imperfectly considered in the limits of this chapter.

It may be remarked, however, in general, that the Scriptures, while fully recognizing the direct agency of the entire Godhead in the affairs of earth, yet distinctly teach that the *immediate* agent of Deity on earth is the *Holy Ghost*, who, prior to the descent of Christ, and after his resurrection and ascension, acted, and still acts, as the *vicegerent* of the Godhead in all the affairs of men. The language of Christ, during his active ministry of three years' duration, would seem to imply that for that space of time the Spirit was not so *fully* present with man, and so *actively* and *intimately* employed in the interests of earth as he had been, or as he was yet to be. Says

Christ, "It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, *the Comforter will not come unto you ;* but if I depart, I will send him unto you." And when this promise was fulfilled upon the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost is represented as *coming down from heaven* upon the disciples assembled in the name of the Lord.

For four thousand years prior to this, however, the Holy Spirit had acted upon the earth as the vicergerent of Deity. He it was who at creation moved upon the waters and brought order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. Before the flood he acted upon the minds and hearts of men, when God said, in regard to him : "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Psalmist, hundreds of years ago, recognized his presence in the memorable words, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there ; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." He it is of whom Isaiah speaks, in the oft-quoted words, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." He it was who was recognized in that revelation to Zerubbabel by the lips of Zechariah : "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." He it was who guided the minds and hearts of ancient prophets and poets, in making a record of

the Divine will ; for Peter declares that these “ holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” He it was who in the great mystery of the conception of Christ acted for the Deity, so that the *word* being made flesh, “dwelt among us.” *Thus, for four thousand years*, from the creation until the coming of Christ, such distinct recognition is made of the Spirit’s presence and agency, that no room is left for question. And from his descent, upon the day of Pentecost, until the present moment, this same blessed being has been at work on the earth, the authorized agent of the Godhead in all that pertains to the work of Deity.

Some, however, may regard what has now been said touching the Spirit’s work as altogether too general. Let it be remarked, then, more particularly,

1st. *That it is the prerogative of the Spirit to restrain from evil.* His power is continually exerted in withholding men from the commission of sins — from running into extremes of wickedness. This is a great work. It is undoubtedly to this prerogative of the Holy Spirit that that text refers which has been already quoted : “ My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” The connection in which these words are found clearly indicates their meaning. The world had grown exceedingly corrupt ; mankind had gone on from year to year, and from generation to generation, until God had resolved to sweep them, with the besom of destruction, from the face of the earth. They had filled up at length their cup of wrath, and

now God says, "My Spirit shall no longer strive with them ; I leave them without restraints ; I give them over to themselves, that they may make their condemnation sure."

This same truth is still further implied in that noble language of the proto-martyr, Stephen, when addressing the obstinate Jews bent upon his destruction. He says : " Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always *resist* the Holy Ghost." This certainly implies that the Spirit was striving with them ; that he was seeking to lead them away from sin, and into holiness ; away from corruption into purity ; but that they *resisted* the efforts put forth by him in divine compassion. What a mercy to man, to have such a being as this actively engaged in their behalf ! How careful should we be, lest we *grieve* him by our obstinate resistance offered to his blessed restraints !

2. Then, again, it is the prerogative of the Spirit *to lead mankind into all spiritual truth ; to enlighten them concerning the existence and nature of sin ; their own characters as fallen beings ; the character of God and his law ; the nature of Christ and his atonement ; and generally to instruct and enlighten them in all the great themes bearing upon redemption.*

The Scriptures are very clear upon this point. "The Comforter," says Christ, "which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.)

Equally explicit are those other words of our Saviour, "When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you." How important the functions here described as belonging to the office work of the Holy Ghost! He *reveals* the things of God to the mind of man. He *unfolds* the feelings, sympathies, aims, and purposes of Jehovah, to the soul of the believer. He "takes of the things of Christ," evidently those things in and of Christ, which relate to the redemption of a lost world, and *shows* them to those for whose temporal and eternal benefit they are designed. As at creation, the Spirit moved amid chaos, and brought order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and beauty out of deformity, so now is he found in the soul of man, engaged in the same beneficent work. Darkness reigns in the soul until the Spirit gives it light, and error misleads it until the Spirit brings it to the truth. Glorious agent of light, and life, and peace! He it is who makes of man a "*new creature*," and fits the soul for the abode of Deity. But,

3. *It is the Spirit's prerogative to convict every elect soul of its depravity; to lead it to see sin in all its enormity in the sight of God, and to repent of it with that godly sorrow which is unto life eternal.*

Humiliating as it may be to the pride of man, and slow as he may be to make the admission, yet it is

true that no soul will ever repent of sin, without the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. The language of Christ clearly implies this, when, speaking of the descent of the Spirit, he says, "He will reprove the world of sin." The word here translated "reprove" is the same which is elsewhere used to express *conviction*, as in John viii. 9: "And they which heard it, being *convicted by their own conscience*." Also, in 1 Corinthians xiv. 24: "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is *convinced* of all." And also in James ii. 9: "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are *convinced* of the law as transgressors." This, then according to the declaration of Christ, is a part of the office work of the Spirit. He convinces the world of sin. The soul lies unconscious of its burden of depravity and guilt until enlightened by the Holy Ghost. Awakened by this blessed agent, the sinner beholds his danger, and sees the fiery billows which roll beneath him. He will sleep on, like one resting in security upon a volcano, until the Holy Spirit opens his eyes to his danger. Sermons will be preached to him in vain; prayers will ascend for him to no purpose; admonitions, warnings, counsels, alarming providences, sickness, disease, death — all, all will be powerless until the Spirit shall move upon the adamant heart, and melt it to contrition. How *essential*, then, to the happiness of the soul, that the third person in the Trinity should exert his glorious power in its behalf. Then,

4. *It is the prerogative of the Spirit to lead the*

convicted soul to Jesus, and to impart faith to it, so that it may see him the only Saviour, and rest upon him only for salvation.

This is regeneration. Conviction is by no means the only effect wrought upon the soul by the Holy Spirit. If convicted, merely, the soul would sink down in rayless despair. A further effect must be wrought upon it. It must not only see its *ruin*, but must see that there is *redemption* for it. Jesus must be revealed to it as the only Saviour. It must be led to the cross. It must be brought to see the "King in his beauty." Christ must be revealed to it as the "chiefest among ten thousand." It must learn to trust in Jesus, to exercise faith in him, and to love him. Now all this is the effect of the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. This is clearly taught by the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians xii. 3: "Wherefore I give you to understand that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed. And that *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*" To see Christ as the Lord of Glory, to own him as such, to rest in him with confidence as the only deliverer from sin and death, is a work wrought only by the Holy Ghost. How necessary, then, is the Spirit's agency, to our present and eternal felicity! Let us see that we drive him not from us by our indifference. Then,

5. It is the prerogative of the spirit *to lead the regenerated soul onward and upward in the divine life, becoming the active agent in sanctification,*

causing it to grow in grace daily — advancing it in the pathway of purity and holiness, enabling it to die more and more unto sin, and live more and more unto righteousness. Having begun a good work in the soul, it is his to carry it on unto perfection.

The Scriptures abound in proofs upon this point. Every where the soul's sanctification is ascribed to the third person in the Trinity. Consider such texts as the following: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments to do them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you to salvation through *sanctification of the Spirit* and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 13). So too, Peter addresses his fellow Christians as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit.*" (1 Pet. i. 2.) And we are informed by Paul, that, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. (Titus iii. 5). It is also well known that there are a great number of scripture passages which represent the children of God as under the continual guidance and control of this glorious Being. They are said "to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" — "to be under the law of the Spirit" — "to be after the Spirit" — "to be spiritually minded" — "to have the Spirit dwelling in them" — "to be led

by the Spirit"—“to have the Spirit of adoption”—“to have the first-fruits of the Spirit”—and they are told that “they are the temple of the Holy Ghost.” All these are most significant expressions, and show how fully the third person in the Godhead has control of the regenerate, and how intimately associated he is with their whole spiritual life. All their growth in grace and progress in holiness is due to his *relations to them*, and his *operations within them*. Then

6. *It is the Spirit's prerogative to bear evidence to the soul, touching its regeneration.* This is evidently the meaning of the words, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 16.) The Holy Ghost thus becomes the gracious source of comfortable assurance to the soul, touching its salvation. By means of the inspired Word—through the divinely appointed ordinances of religion, both public and private—through various providences, afflictions, and trials, overruled by this blessed Agent for spiritual good—and through direct contact with, and the exercise of, an immediate power upon the soul—does the Holy Ghost lead the regenerate nature to the comfortable knowledge that it is indeed “an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, to a heavenly inheritance.” It is through the Spirit alone, that we are enabled to say, “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.” Through him, we can take up the exult-

ant strain of the Apostle; and cry, "We *know* that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It is through his gracious witness, bearing in and with our spirits, that we are enabled "to rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

7. It is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to *seal every regenerate soul to eternal life*. Thus Paul says in the epistle to the Ephesians: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise," and "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." "*To seal*" has a two-fold significance. It means, 1st, to attest or verify, as in the case of instruments of writing, such as deeds, mortgages, wills, etc., which are sealed that their genuineness may be attested. Thus, too, *circumcision* is called by Paul, "the *seal* of the righteousness by faith," *i. e.*, this rite was the mark by which the faith of Abraham was attested. So, too, Paul tells the Corinthians that they are the *seal* of his apostleship, *i. e.*, by their regeneration, and holy lives, they attest the Divine commission of the apostle. But 2d, "*to seal*" means *to secure*, to make *safe*. We read that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having *this seal*, the Lord knoweth them that are his." John, in the Apocalyptic vision, saw a book *sealed* with *seven seals*. This was the book of God's decrees, and the *seals* signify that those decrees are immutable and sure. So, also, the

sepulcher of Christ was made sure by *sealing* the stone at the mouth, and setting a watch.

When, then, the Spirit seals a soul, he *attests* that that soul belongs to God. He sets God's mark upon it, and thenceforward it is God's. The soul that is sealed by the Holy Ghost is made sure for heaven. That seal can never be broken.

Behold, then, the wonderful prerogatives of the Holy Spirit. It is his to *restrain* the world from the commission of moral evils; to *enlighten* the individual soul touching the nature and desert of sin; to *convict* the darkened mind of guilt; to *lead* the awakened sinner to Christ; to *sanctify* the soul, and lead it onward and upward continually in a life of holiness; to *bear witness* with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, crowning all, as the capstone of this arch of mercy, to *seal* the soul unto *eternal life*. This is the great, the comprehensive work wrought by the HOLY GHOST, the THIRD PERSON in the Trinity, for a lost and ruined race.

Reader, have you been made the subject of the Spirit's power, in these directions? Has he opened your eyes to sin? Has he brought you to Christ? Is he working sanctification in your heart? Has he sealed you to God? He may even now be moving upon your soul. "Quench not the Spirit." "Grieve" him not. Open your hearts to the heavenly Messenger. Invite him in as a welcome guest, and he will cause you to "rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory." He will preserve you from spiritual ruin, guard you from all temptations, shield you

from all the assaults of the devil, and present you, at length, without a stain, before the throne of final judgment, to hear from Christ the welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." O then, as you value your eternal happiness, yield to the HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER. Let your prayer be,

"Eternal Spirit, source of light,
Enlivening, consecrating fire,
Descend, and with celestial heat,
My dull, my frozen heart inspire,
My soul refine, my dross consume,
Come, condescending Spirit, come."

CHAPTER XVI.

“O God, thou bottomless abyss!
Thee to perfection who can know?
O height immense! what words suffice
Thy countless attributes to show?
Greatness unspeakable is thine;
Greatness whose undiminished ray,
When short-lived worlds are lost, shall shine
When earth and heaven are fled away.”

JOHN WESLEY.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”—JOHN xvii. 3.

THOSE who have read consecutively the preceding chapters, will remember that we have considered,

- I. THE FACT OF THE DIVINE EXISTENCE; and,
- II. THE MODE OF THAT EXISTENCE.

In other words, we have seen that *God exists*, and that he exists in the mysterious union of *three persons in one Godhead*, known as FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

The next point falling naturally in order, and demanding consideration, is that of the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES. *What are the perfections of this wondrous Being whose existence has now been demonstrated?*

1. It must be evident to every intelligent reader, that we can not *know* God, in any comprehensive sense, until we have considered his attributes somewhat in detail. We may admit all that we have as yet affirmed and proved touching the Divine Being, yet if we do not study his nature in its *peculiarities*, we have no adequate conception of him. How can we be said to *know* a friend or an acquaintance, unless we have *studied* his character and learned his distinguishing traits; his virtues; his peculiarities? So, no man can know God as he should, until he has learned of his attributes, and carefully considered them in their variety and perfection.

2. Moreover, an accurate knowledge of the Divine attributes, is absolutely essential to an *intelligent* Christianity. Without this knowledge, we can not build ourselves up in the faith of the Gospel. That man has a very imperfect knowledge of the laws of his religious being, who does not know that our faith in the system of truth taught in Scripture is strong, and our attachment to it sincere, *just in proportion to the clearness and accuracy of our conception of the Divine perfections*. This fact can not be insisted upon too strenuously. The history of the church in all ages demonstrates unmistakably, that just to the extent in which a *true, clear, and comprehensive knowledge* of the *Divine attributes* has prevailed, just to that extent has there ever been a *vigorous* Christianity — a religion which, in its strength and power, has withstood the encroachments of error, and made inroads upon the domain

of Satan. And on the other hand, just in proportion as men have allowed *obscure* or *perverted* conceptions of the Divine attributes to obtain possession of their minds, just to that extent religion has lost its power with them, and ceased to exert a *controlling* influence upon their lives.

3. And the reason for this must be patent to every thoughtful person. *God is the sum and center of true religion*; and the more clear, and full, and comprehensive our views of God, the more *true* and *perfect* will our religion be. A person who sees God only as a *God of love*, for instance, forgetting that *justice* is also one of his attributes, possesses but a *partial*, an *imperfect*, a *one-sided* religion. So he who admits the *justice* of God, without tempering that attribute with *mercy* and *forbearance*, or who dwells upon the *eternity* and *immensity* of Jehovah, without giving to his *tenderness*, *pity*, and *compassion* that prominence which is their due, is not, and can not be, an intelligent Christian. So with him who looks only at any *one* or *two* of his many perfections, without taking into the account *the whole*. This is to *rob* God, and as a necessary consequence, to build ourselves up in a defective Christianity. This is alike dishonoring to our Creator, and injurious to ourselves.

It is easy to find in the origin of errors in religion many illustrations of the fact now stated. The great fallacy of those infidels who reject a Divine revelation, may be traced directly to their false and unfounded conceptions of God's attributes. They

say that God's perfections exalt him so far above all *created* beings, that he can not condescend to hold intercourse with man. Now if these persons would study the perfections of Jehovah in the light of both *reason* and *revelation*, they would clearly see that *however* exalted, God is yet a being of infinite compassion, and that his *pity*, and *love*, and *mercy*, have *constrained* him — if we may use the expression — to make a revelation of his will to his intelligent creatures in a matter so important as their future and eternal destiny. It is true — yes, it is a *great* and *blessed* truth, and one never to be forgotten — that God is a being of *infinite* dignity. This should be known and appreciated, and insisted upon, even more than it is; but a knowledge of this should not hinder a hearty recognition of that other fact, that he is also *full of tenderness* and *love*. If infidels had but the comprehensive conception of the Divine nature to which the Psalmist had attained, when he exclaimed, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly," their infidelity would vanish. They would see how, out of compassion for the *lowly* and *dependent* objects of his creative power, he could, in entire consistency with his dignity and glory, make to them a revelation of his will.

So, too, the stupendous error of Universalism, which is lulling so many thousands into false security, crying, "*peace! peace!* when there is no peace," has its fountain-head either in an *utter rejection*, or a *partial recognition*, of some of the essential perfec-

tions of the Divine nature. The reader will no doubt see, before we have finished these pages, that *strict, unbending, retributive justice ; absolute, infinite, and unwavering equity ;* are as truly essential characteristics of a Divine being, and are as clearly ascribed to God in Scripture, as are any *other* of his perfections. Yet it is well known that the whole faith of Universalism is built up, either upon a *denial* of the existence, in any proper sense, of these attributes in the Divine character, or such a *toning down, and modification* of their exercise, as to leave them inoperative. The great and fatal error of these persons would, however, at once give way, if, without prejudice, they should heartily receive that comprehensive delineation of his nature as drawn by the Almighty himself, and recorded in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7 : “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and *that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third and to the fourth generation.*” *How much wiser men, in this day, affect to be, than God himself,* when, in their presumption and folly, they assign to him, or withhold from him, *this or that* attribute, at pleasure ! What wonder that, as “blind leaders of the blind,” they themselves plunge, and drag their followers after them, into the ditch of irretrievable ruin ?

4. It is, however, not only necessary to an intelligent reception of the system of doctrine taught in

Scripture, that we have clear and comprehensive views of the Divine perfections, *but this is also essential to the proper development of the graces of the Christian character in individual souls.* If a parent had a son, in whom he wished to develop the power of music to the highest degree, he would show his wisdom by setting before him the compositions of the best masters, bringing him into contact with the best teachers, and giving him the privilege of hearing the most skillful performers of the times. He could, thus, not only see the perfection to which others have attained, but he could detect, in comparison with *their* attainments, his *own* defects, and be the better prepared to apply the proper remedy. So, if one should wish to make his son a sculptor, he would require him to study the best models within his reach. He would send him to Italy, the home of the arts. He would obtain for him admission to the studios of the best masters. He would set him down before the most perfect statues. He would not allow him to vitiate his taste by the contemplation of defective works of art. All that is nearest to nature, and to nature in her *highest, best creations*; *all, indeed, that is nearest to perfection,* he would place before him; for it is thus that the inventive power and genius within him would be developed. And then he would not be called a *finished* sculptor, a master of his noble art, when he had merely acquired the power of producing a *creditable head, or bust, or arm.* No; he would be the *master* only when he had so studied *every* part as to produce *all* skillfully,

and so as to make one part *harmonize* with all the rest. *He* would be but a *bungler*, who to the bust of a Venus de Medici should add the dwarfed body and distorted limbs of a Richard Third; or who should crown the matchless form of a Hebe with the disgusting head of a Medusa.

The same is true, also, of *painting*. To be a *master*, one must have long and patient contact with the best productions of the most skillful artists. The whole science of *sketching, grouping, shading, perspective, blending of colors, arrangement of objects and figures*, and, above all, the *harmonious adaptation of one part to another*, must be secured; in short, one must have the *well-skilled eye*, the *well-trained hand*, and the *thoroughly-informed judgment*, all produced as the result of long and patient study and practice, before *the best models*, and with *the best masters*, to claim a high position in this profession. A distinguished painter, it is said, would never allow his eye to rest upon a *defective* picture, or the production of a *mere tyro* in the art, lest, as he observed, that keen appreciation of the *truly* beautiful, which was the product within him of long years of patient culture, should be in the *faintest* degree *blunted* or *obscured*. He would not willingly *look*, even for an instant, upon any but the highest and best expressions of genius, lest his skill should lose something of its hard-earned acquisitions.

The application of these illustrations to the subject under discussion, can not be difficult. It should be the aim of every human being, to build up within

him the *noblest character possible*. This, however, can only be done by a *careful* and *long-continued* and *patient* study of the *best* and *highest* developments of being. *Something*, it is true, can be done in this direction, by placing before us the virtues of great and good men, by contemplating their excellences, and reaching out after their attainments. But after all, these are but *men*. *Their* attainments are immature; and in them, we have before us only *imperfect* and *defective* models. Though we *should* attain to their standard, we would yet fall far short of that after which it is our glory and our privilege to reach. In comparing ourselves with the *best* of men, we are only subjecting ourselves to the condemnation of the Apostle: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; *but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*" This being true, God has given us, in *his own nature*, the *grandest*, *purest*, *noblest* study — the *best* and *highest* model for our continued contemplation. Pope, England's accomplished poet, has left upon record the oft-quoted line —

"The proper study of mankind is man."

This declaration is not only *false*, but *pernicious*. We amend that motto, by asserting the more *Scriptural* and more *reasonable* sentiment, "*The proper study of mankind is*" — God; *God, in all the matchless perfections of his infinitely pure and holy nature*. The difference between the study of *man* and the

study of *God*, lies in this: that in the one case we have before us a *distorted*, *dwarfed*, and *disfigured* model; while in the other we have a model *perfect* in every respect, and in the contemplation of which we are lifted above ourselves, above humanity, and carried into an atmosphere *purser* than any we can breathe in contact with our fellow worms.

5. But then, this study of the character of God, in order to secure the highest possible results in our souls, *must be the study of his perfections in detail*. It is not the occasional thought of God as a *mere existence*, that produces the effect upon us which we should long for. Sighs after conformity to God, however sincere, oft-repeated, or long-continued, will not effect the result after which we aim. We must *study* his attributes carefully and long. We must *dwell* upon them in detail. In the *earnest* and *persistent* contemplation of his *omnipotence*, will we discover our own *nothingness*, *weakness*, and *imbecility*, as we can in no other way. In the study of his *eternity*, *immensity*, and *unspeakable glory*, as the *first cause* of all things, the only self-existent being, will our souls be filled with a holy awe; and that profound *reverence* be begotten and cherished within us, which is the foundation of an intelligent and life-long devotion. In the contemplation of his *omniscience* and *omnipresence*, those two attributes which bring us so near both to the *eye* and *mind* of God — one revealing the fact that he always *knows* all things, and the other that he always *sees* all things — how are a holy *fear* and a righteous *dread* cherished within.

lest that all-seeing eye should behold evil in us, and that all-knowing mind condemn us for the guilt of which we are ourselves conscious. And thus we might go forward and designate similar results from the careful study of the other attributes of Deity — his *love*, his *wisdom*, his *goodness*, his *mercy*, his *justice*, and his *truth*. Each, of itself, in its perfection and glory, is a study; and in the contemplation of each, some grace within us is expanded and invigorated. Every attribute of Deity thus becomes a *lever*, as it were, lifting us up from the depths of selfishness and depravity, into nearness to God, and fellowship with his Son. We can not study carefully, and day by day, the *mercy*, *love*, *wisdom*, *goodness*, *justice* and *truth* of God, without longing to be made more like him in these attributes; and this longing, once begotten, will lead to the diligent use of the means necessary to secure the desired end. A great cry will go up from our souls to the Infinite One for strength and guidance; that cry will be heard and answered, and a work will be begun in us by the Holy Spirit, which will never cease until we are presented, faultless, before the eternal throne, with exceeding joy. Thus it is, that by a study of the attributes of Deity, “we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.”

6. It is proper to add, before closing this introductory chapter upon the attributes, *that when we shall speak of a Divine perfection, we wish it to be understood that it belongs alike to each person of the Godhead*. The attributes are *common* to Father, Son,

and Holy Ghost. But while this is true, we must never forget that we have, *in Christ*, a *manifestation* of the Divine perfections, in actual exercise. He is "God manifest in the flesh." He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." The Divine attributes are, in him, brought nigh for daily and familiar contemplation. He reveals the Godhead to us, in all the grand and glorious excellences of the Divine nature. Christ having come, our belief in the existence of these glorious perfections is not based alone upon a *verbal* revelation. We see them actualized, *vitalized*, and familiarized, in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

And now, in conclusion, let us remind the reader, that the reason why God, both in Scripture and in the life of Christ, has exhibited his perfections and revealed his attributes, is that his glory might be promoted in the salvation from sin and death of those who, through eternal ages, might proclaim his praise. Will you, reader, be among that number? Will it redound to your eternal blessedness, that God has revealed himself as a God "infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth?"

Remember that if you turn to God, all his glorious attributes will be exercised in promoting your happiness, here and hereafter. What a thought! Worm that you are — impure, sinful, depraved and degraded, lost and ruined — if only you turn your back upon your sins, and look to God in Christ, he will become at once your friend, and all his glorious

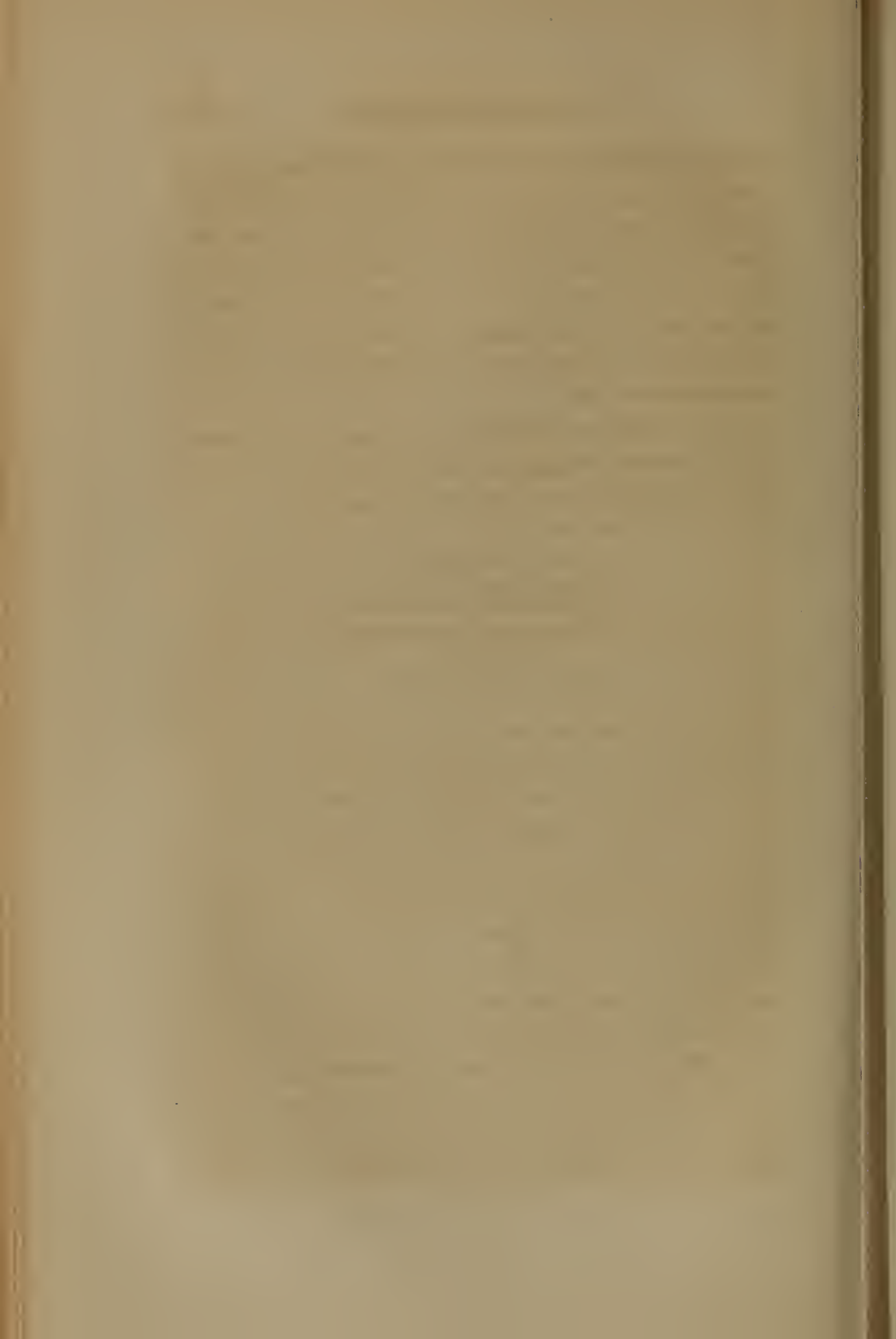
attributes will be arrayed upon your side. Does it appear to you that this is a blessedness too great for one so vile? Is it almost incredible to you, that such a boon should be yours? Consider such language as this: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee — yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them and shalt not find them, even them which contended with thee. They that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee. Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." No language can be more explicit, none more encouraging than this. The moment a soul turns to God *in Christ*, that moment the *Almighty* God becomes its shield, its defense, its buckler. God becomes "a wall of fire" round about the sinner the instant he looks to him by the eye of faith. He stands, from that time, not in his own strength, but in the *power of the Omnipotent*; and Paul could with truth affirm, "All things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

On the other hand, it is equally true, that against him who rejects the mercy of God, every Divine

attribute stands arrayed. His *omnipotence* is concerned, not *to save*, but *to destroy* the sinner who scorns his love. His justice stands an impassable barrier in the way of the justification of him who will not believe in Jesus. Yes; and even the mercy of God will at length cease to plead the cause of the rebel, and will heartily approve his rejection from the realms of bliss.

Reader! where standest thou? Are the attributes of God arrayed against thee? TURN; TURN AT ONCE, AND FIND MERCY ERE IT BE TOO LATE.

“Fly, O fly ye to the mountain;
Linger not in all the plain;
Leave this Sodom of corruption;
Turn not — look not back again;
Fly to Jesus;
Linger not in all the plain.”



CHAPTER XVII.

“Stupendous Architect! Thou, thou art all!
My soul flies up and down in thoughts of thee,
And finds herself but at the center still!
‘I AM’ thy name! Existence all thine own!
Creation’s nothing; flattered much if styled
‘The thin and fleeting atmosphere of God.’”—YOUNG.

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is
unsearchable.”—PSALMS clv. 8.

WHEN the question is asked, in the book of Job, “Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” we are, of course, compelled to answer unqualifiedly in the negative. We can not “find out the Almighty to perfection.” He is *infinite*, and we are *finite*, and the finite can not comprehend the infinite. Nor is it our purpose in these chapters to undertake a task acknowledged to be hopeless. To a certain extent, however, it is our privilege to know God. Our finite capacities may attain to, and hold a moiety of his infinity; and our purpose will be secured if, in these pages, we aid the reader in obtaining a better conception of One, the fullness of whose wis-

dom is unsearchable, and "whose ways are past finding out."

In the last chapter, we presented a few thoughts upon the importance of securing as clear and comprehensive a view as possible of the Divine attributes. We there saw that infidelity, in nearly all its forms; that, indeed, every system of theological error might be traced directly to defective or perverted views of the Divine perfections. We also saw that all satisfactory progress in the Divine life, all growth in grace, and consequent acceptable fulfillment of religious duty, depend upon the extent of our acquaintance with, and appreciation of, the attributes of that Being to whose image it is the aim of all true Christians to be more and more conformed. The nature of this inquiry into the attributes of God, then, is not *theoretical*, but intensely *practical*. It lies, as a great practical agency, at the very foundation of our spiritual advancement.

Before we ask your attention to a consideration of the *nature* of any of the Divine perfections, it is important that we should inquire,

1. WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD? And,
2. HOW MAY THEY BE CLASSIFIED?

To answer these two questions will be our object in this chapter; and when we have answered them, we will have gone far in preparing the way for our subsequent investigations.

1. The first question, then, which we are to consider, is,

WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD? Of course,

among those who take the Scriptures for their guide, there can be no hesitation as to the manner in which this question is to be answered. *Those, and those only, are the attributes of God, which the SCRIPTURES reveal as such ; and no attribute is to be denied to God which the Scriptures claim to be his.* Let this be our rule, and we will find no difficulty attaching to this part of our investigations. Our task will be simply to inquire “what attributes are *ascribed* to God in his Holy Word?” These — whether men like them or not — belong to him, and must be conceded to be his.

Those who have most carefully examined Scripture to ascertain its teachings upon this point, are very generally agreed, that while the Divine perfections are therein set forth under an almost endless variety of names and titles, that they may all be included under *nine* or *ten* specific heads. Thus the Scriptures represent God as possessed of omnipotence ; omniscience ; omnipresence ; immensity ; immutability ; wisdom ; justice ; goodness ; truth ; and holiness. To this, some add love, as an attribute not included under the general designation, “goodness ;” and others add infinity as a necessary adjunct of all the other perfections. Dr. John Dick, one of the clearest writers upon theology of modern times, makes *nine* Divine attributes, as follows : immensity ; immutability ; knowledge ; wisdom ; power ; goodness ; justice ; truth ; and holiness. Here, what some call omnipotence, he calls power ; what some characterize as omniscience, he designates as know-

ledge. He regards omnipresence as embraced in immensity; and instead of making a separate attribute of "love," he includes it under the more general attribute of "goodness." This enumeration, then, does not differ materially from the one first given.

2. The Westminster Divines, in framing that admirable compend, known as the *shorter catechism*, answered the great question, "What is God?" in the following language: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Here they first state that God, *as to his essence*, is a spirit, and then enumerate *nine* attributes or perfections of this Spiritual Being: namely, infinity, eternity, unchangeableness, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. This designation is substantially the same as those we have already given, except that no distinction is made between *immensity* and *infinity*; the knowledge of God being included in his wisdom, and love being embraced in goodness. It will also be seen that this language of the catechism makes infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness to characterize not only God himself, but also *all* the *attributes* of the Godhead. Thus God is not only infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his very nature, but he is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably wise, powerful, just, holy, good, and true. It is thus not only affirmed of *God himself*, that eternity, infinity, and unchangeableness are perfections of his being, but that these are also perfections of *his other perfections* — a distinction we

will have occasion to notice when we come to speak of the *classification* of the Divine attributes.

3. The distinguished Dr. Timothy Dwight, one of the most profound of American theologians, in his "Systematic Theology," sums up the Divine perfections under *ten* distinct heads, as follows: Eternity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, benevolence, justice, truth, mercy, and wisdom. Here immensity is included in omnipresence; knowledge in omniscience; love and goodness are embraced in benevolence; while *mercy* is made a distinct attribute, and *wisdom* is properly distinguished from omniscience. It will be perceived that Dr. Dwight makes no mention of either infinity or holiness, regarding the first, probably, as not a separate attribute of Deity; and the latter, like some other distinguished theologians, as the "consummate glory of all the other attributes in union." ("Hodge's Outlines.")

4. Rev. Stephen Charnock, B.D., in his "Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God"—a work which, though too elaborate for popular reading, has ever been regarded by the learned as a perfect storehouse of knowledge upon the subjects treated—has summed up the Divine perfections under eleven heads: namely, spirituality, eternity, immutability, omnipresence, knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, dominion, and patience. In this enumeration, it will be seen that Charnock makes no mention of truth and justice as distinct attributes of Deity, as they are both, in his estima-

tion, necessary to God's holiness, and hence included in it. He adds, however, the two perfections, dominion and patience, differing in this from most other writers, who consider dominion, or the exercise of sovereign authority, nothing more than a *result*, or *consequent* of the possession of his other perfections. The argument is this: If God be eternal, immutable, omnipresent, of infinite knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, and goodness, *he must be the sovereign God*, and can but exercise supreme dominion over all created objects. *Dominion*, then, is not denied to God by any, but is not, with Charnock, regarded as a distinct attribute. So, too, patience is conceded to God by all, but by most is considered simply as one manifestation of goodness. God's goodness being infinite, patience or long-suffering is a necessary result. This, then, is rather a *mode* in which goodness is displayed, than a *separate perfection* of the Divine nature.

5. The Rev. William Cooke, D.D., in his elaborate work, "The Deity," being the second edition of his "*Theiotes*," enumerates the attributes of God as follows: spirituality, eternity, independence, immutability, omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience; and then adds, that God is infinite in wisdom, of boundless benevolence, of perfect holiness, and possessed of a disposition for *communion* with the intelligent creatures of his creation. By this enumeration, truth or veracity, and justice or righteousness, are included in holiness; while goodness and love are embraced in benevolence. Dr. Cooke

makes God's disposition for communion with his intelligent creatures, a distinct attribute ; while other writers recognize this property of the Divine mind, as the handmaid, merely, of his goodness. His goodness prompts him to seek the highest good of his creatures ; and this can only be effected through communion with God — the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual.

6. And thus we might go forward, almost without limit, presenting the various lists of Divine perfections, as given, at different times, by the various writers upon the subject, and as embodied in the creeds of the various churches. Nor need we, in this, be confined to *modern* writers, or to any particular church. There has been a remarkable agreement between the ancients and the moderns in this matter. *The fathers*, as they are called — those learned men who were the pioneers in the domain of religious investigation, immediately after the apostolic days, and down for hundreds of years thereafter — held substantially the same views touching the Divine attributes which are generally entertained to-day. So has it been with the churches. The Papal, the Greek, and the Protestant communions, though differing greatly in many particulars ; though maintaining a diametrically opposite belief upon some of the most vital features of religion, have yet expressed themselves with a marked harmony upon the Divine perfections. The attributes have ever been regarded, both in ancient and in modern times, as reducible to the *nine* or *ten* of which we have made mention. So

that there has been here really little controversy. Some have called these perfections by *one* name, and some by *another* ; and some have thought that one attribute embraced some other, as in the case of Dr. Dick, who, in the goodness of God, sees his love also ; or, as in the case of Dr. Dwight, who, in omnipresence includes immensity, and in omniscience embraces what others designate as the Divine knowledge. But all these differences are slight and unimportant, as will be readily perceived, and are lost sight of in the *substantial agreement* which prevails among all these writers. Having the same source of information from which to draw — the infallible Word — they have all been brought to substantially the same conclusion.

7. Perhaps, now, the inquiry will arise, "*How are the Divine attributes to be characterized in these pages?*" We reply, that the language of the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be adopted with a single amendment. It seems clear that "*knowledge*" is an attribute properly distinguishable from "*wisdom*." Knowledge is the *simple apprehension of things as they are ; as the eye perceives the objects presented to it. Wisdom is the arrangement of our ideas in proper order, and in such a train as to produce some useful, practical result. Mere knowledge is not wisdom, for the best informed are not always the wisest.* We therefore choose, in this discussion, to consider the Divine perfections under *ten* heads. We shall consider God as possessed of infinity, eternity, unchangeableness, knowledge, wisdom, power, holi-

ness, justice, goodness, and truth. In this enumeration, *holiness* is considered as a *distinct* attribute, and *love* and *mercy* are included in *goodness*.

Having now seen what the Divine perfections are, let us consider,

II. HOW THEY MAY BE CLASSIFIED.

And here, too, different theological writers have pursued different methods.

1. Some have called certain attributes *negative*, and others they have characterized as *positive*. The *negative*, are those perfections of the Divine nature by which God is distinguished from all *imperfect* beings. Under this head, of course, would fall his eternal self-existence; his infinity, and his immutability. The *positive* attributes, are those which, though in God and of him, are yet in some measure in his intelligent creatures likewise. This classification, however, is unfortunate, owing to the fact that we may be misled by the terms *negative* and *positive*, and hence is now but little used.

2. Another classification is into *absolute* and *relative*. The *absolute* perfections, it is claimed, are those which belong to the *essence* of God; in other words, those which are his by virtue of his existence. The *relative* are those which have reference to the existence of others. This classification is also faulty; for all the attributes, as we believe, are of the *essence* of God; hence all may be termed *absolute*.

3. Another division, is into the *natural* and *moral* perfections. The *natural* attributes, according to this classification, are those which pertain to God

as an infinite, *rational* Spirit, such as eternity, knowledge, power, and wisdom. The *moral* are those additional attributes which belong to him, as an infinite, *righteous* spirit, such as justice, goodness, and truth. This classification, while less objectionable than those before mentioned, is subject to this difficulty: that the term "*natural*," as distinguished from "*moral*," is liable to mislead. Are not all God's attributes *natural*? Do they not all belong to him as an infinite, *rational* spirit?

4. Another division still, is into *communicable* and *incommunicable* attributes. The first, designating those perfections which are found in intelligent creatures *in some faint measure, some slight degree*—such as knowledge, wisdom, goodness, and truth. The *incommunicable* are those *never* found in the creature, and which, from their very nature, can not be imparted to him—such as *infinity* and *eternity*. The difficulty with this division is, that all God's attributes are *infinite*, and to say that an *infinite* attribute is communicable in a *finite* degree, seems a contradiction in terms. Not one of God's attributes, *as it exists in him*, is communicable. It will be perceived, from what has now been said, how difficult it is to obtain clear definitions in a matter so much above us. We see, in all this, the *greatness* of the questions of which we treat. There are, however, two classifications, which are clear, simple, and intelligible. either of which we may adopt without difficulty or confusion:

1. We distinguish between those attributes of

which we can predicate MORAL properties, and those of which we can not. Holiness, justice, goodness, and truth—*four* out of the *ten*—have clearly moral properties. Infinity, eternity, unchangeableness, knowledge, wisdom, and power—the remaining *six*—can not be said to have moral qualities. This classification has this advantage: that it is easily remembered, from its analogy to the division of the *Decalogue*. The commands being ten, the first four contain our duties to God, and the last six our duties to man. Then,

2. The other classification, which we think equally clear, is a division of the perfections into those which appear to be *attributes* of *other attributes*, and those which have not this character. *Three* of the Divine perfections are evidently *attributes* of *seven* others. These are *infinity*, *eternity*, and *unchangeableness*. Now, the Divine *knowledge*, *wisdom*, *power*, *holiness*, *justice*, *goodness*, and *truth*, are each *infinite*, *eternal*, and *unchangeable*. Hence, these last three named, are not only glorious *perfections* of Deity, but they are *attributes* of all the other attributes of the Divine nature. This is a clear distinction, affording us, as it would appear, an easy classification, and one readily remembered.

We have now seen how the two questions, "*What are the Divine attributes?*" and "*How may they be classified?*" can be answered. To the reader who is in search of the highest of all knowledge, the most useful of all instruction, this discussion will not be in vain. Such investigations, of course, require some

thought. If it is impossible for man to gain a knowledge of any *earthly* science without study, much more is it true of the most sublime of all sciences — the *knowledge of God*.

And let the reader remember that he has here entered upon that course of instruction which is to go forward during eternal ages. To know God more and more, to investigate his character, to reach out after a comprehensive knowledge of his nature and glory, will be the delightful employment of the redeemed forever. This is what those now in heaven are doing. This is their employment. They have passed into the higher departments of that school which we have entered as beginners. This is but a *graded* school. *We* are in the lower; the redeemed in glory are in the more advanced divisions.

The thought, however, which should, above all, encourage us in these investigations, *is that while we are in Christ's school, we have Christ as our teacher*. The perfections of which we have spoken in this chapter, are the perfections of our glorious instructor. *His* infinite *knowledge*, and *wisdom*, and *truth*, are sufficient for all *our* darkness, and ignorance, and error. Let us draw freely upon him, then, for his fullness can never be exhausted.

To the impenitent reader, we would address the words of this glorious instructor: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and *learn of me*, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Will you come — and come now?

CHAPTER XVIII.

“I asked myself what this great God might be
That fashioned me ?

I answered — ‘The all-potent, solely immense,
Surpassing sense ;

Unspeakable, inscrutable, eternal,
Lord over all.

The only terrible, strong, just and true,
Who hath no end, and no beginning knew.’”

HEYWOOD.

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting
arms.” — DEUT. xxxiii. 27.

It was shown in the last chapter, that the Divine perfections, as set forth in Scripture, may be included under *ten* distinct heads : namely, *infinity*, *eternity*, and *unchangeableness*, *knowledge*, *wisdom*, *power*, *holiness*, *justice*, *goodness*, and *truth*. It was shown, also, that these ten attributes may be readily classified under two divisions : namely, *those of which we can predicate moral properties*, being *four* — *holiness*, *justice*, *goodness*, and *truth* — and *those in which moral properties appear to be wanting* : namely, *six* — *infinity*, *eternity*, *unchangeableness*, *knowledge*, *wisdom*, and *power*. Or we may, if we choose, *divide them into those which do, and those which do not*,

modify other attributes. Thus, these three : namely, *infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness*, while in themselves glorious attributes of Deity, are *also* attributes of the other *seven* perfections of the Divine nature. Either of these classifications may be used to fix clearly defined views upon this great subject in the memory of the Bible student.

Having thus taken a *general survey* of the field of our investigations, we are now to draw nearer and take a somewhat closer view of each of these wonderful properties of Deity. And when the reader is reminded that these are the highest themes to which the thought of men or of angels can be directed, he will not be surprised to find himself invited to the most *serious* and *prayerful* study of the subject. He is now to contemplate God in the several properties of his incomprehensible nature. The finite mind is to go out in an effort to grasp something of the Creator's infinity. What a grand endeavor ! What a glorious effort ! The highest archangel which stands before the throne can be engaged in no more elevating employment. What an honor, what a blessing, that sinful worms of the dust are permitted this high and holy privilege. Let us enter upon this study with the most earnest prayers for the Spirit's guidance ; with a sincere desire to know all we can know of that glorious Being who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

I. *The first attribute we are to consider, is*

INFINITY.

And we inquire,

1. *What are we to understand by the infinity of God?* And,

2. *Does Scripture ascribe this perfection to Jehovah?*

An attempt to answer these two questions will bring this part of our subject fully before the mind.

To the question, "*What are we to understand by the INFINITY of God?*" we may answer, that we express by that word the great truth that God is WITHOUT BOUNDS OR LIMITATIONS IN HIS ESSENCE AND PERFECTIONS. As to his essence, God is a Spirit; and when we affirm *infinity* of him, we affirm that this Spirit is in its very nature boundless. So too, with all his perfections: his *knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth*. They are, each of them, without bounds or limits. They can not be measured. No man nor angel has ever measured — no man nor angel *can ever* measure the *infinity* of God. It is an *absolute infinity*. To a child, the wisdom, and knowledge, and power, of a parent or teacher, may *appear* infinite. This, however, is due to the incapacity of the child; to the immaturity of his powers. Not so with God. His infinity is *absolute*. Even surveyed by an infinite being, he would still be seen to be infinite.

The better to grasp this great thought, let it be considered, that under the general designation of "*infinity*," may be included what we know:

1st. As God's *incomprehensibility*. 2nd. His *immensity*. And 3rd. His *omnipresence*.

As God is *infinite*, he must, of course, be *incom-*

prehensible to men or angels, and must *forever* so remain. Though our capacities are capable of endless expansion, and though the powers of angelic beings are susceptible of limitless growth, and though *eternity* itself be given in which to expand, yet neither the powers of men nor angels, will ever reach such a state that they can fully comprehend Jehovah.

IMMENSITY, too, is included under this term infinity. By *immensity*, we mean that property of Deity which renders him infinite in regard to space. *He fills all space. He is every where.* He exists in all parts and places of the universe, whether they are inhabited or not. Where there are no worlds, no created objects or beings, as well as where there are, God is, and by virtue of his immensity, must forever be.

The OMNIPRESENCE of God differs from his immensity, inasmuch as it contemplates the existence of other beings. *God, as immense*, is, by a necessity of his being, *every where*; as *omnipresent*, he is wherever other beings and objects are. *Immensity* belongs to the *essence of God*; *omnipresence* has special reference to the works of his hand. God would have been possessed of immensity, though there had been no creation; he is said to be omnipresent *now* that there are objects aside from himself, with which he can be found.

Without detaining the reader upon what may be regarded as the mere definitions of a great subject, let it be observed that we here gain a glimpse of what must forever remain a most wonderful study to

the highest intelligences. God's *infinity* extends to his essence, to his relations to his creatures, to space, and to all his perfections. Wonderful being! Absolutely without bounds, or limits! Who can but exclaim, in the language of Scripture, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I can not attain unto it."

2. And now, *is this teaching in accordance with Scripture?* Is the doctrine of God's *infinity* based upon Divine revelation? We answer this question in the affirmative. Take the declaration of Solomon, at the dedication of the first temple, as recorded in 1 Kings viii. 27: "But will God, indeed, dwell upon the earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens can not contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!"

In Psalm cxxxix. 7-12, we have that remarkable and oft-quoted declaration of the Psalmist, speaking under Divine direction, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

So, too, God, declaring that it is impossible for the wicked to escape from him, causes the prophet Amos to utter the following words: "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down."

Many other passages might be cited, directly asserting, or clearly implying, the infinity of God. Let these, however, suffice. They teach distinctly that God is every where, in every part of his vast dominions, and that, as an Infinite Being he is without bounds or limitations in all his glorious perfections. This, then, is God's infinity. It is in vain to think to fathom it. We can only *look*, and *wonder*, and *adore*.

II. *The second Divine attribute in the order we have chosen to follow, is*

ETERNITY.

By this term is designated, not only the fact that God is without *beginning*, but also that he is without *end*, or succession of days. As *immensity* is a view of God in relation to *space*, so *eternity* is a view of God in relation to *time*. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as *time*, or *duration*, with God: "A thousand years," says the Psalmist, "are in thy sight but as yesterday, when it is past." And Peter declares that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." He knows no such successive periods as we mark by days, and weeks, and months, and years. The eternity past, as well as the eternity to come, are alike present with him. Indeed, he knows no past, no future. As some one has expressed it, there is, with God, "*but one eternal now*."

Of course this is a great mystery, and like the *infinity* of God, incomprehensible. We can only take,

in this, what the Scriptures declare: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even *from everlasting to everlasting*, thou art God." (Psalms xc. 2.) We must receive, as eminently applicable, that title given to Jehovah in Scripture — "the *eternal* God." We must believe as true what God claims, when he says, "I am the *first*, and I am the *last*, and beside me there is no God." We must believe that Habakkuk asks no idle question when he inquires, "Art thou not from *everlasting*, O Lord, my God, mine Holy One?" And when Moses says to the children of Israel, "The *eternal* God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," we must believe that he speaks not at random; that he utters not words without meaning. So, likewise, when Isaiah utters the words, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth *eternity*" (Isaiah lvii. 15); when Jeremiah says, "The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an *everlasting* King" (Jeremiah x. 10); when Micah asserts of God that his "goings forth have been of old, from *everlasting*" (Micah v. 2); when Paul says "unto the King *Eternal* be honor and glory" (1 Timothy i. 17); and when again he speaks of the "*Eternal* Spirit" (Hebrews ix. 14), we can but accept of such inspired declarations, and cause our faith to conform to them.

Indeed, *eternity of existence* is absolutely *essential* to the *being* of the *true God*. Whatever is not eternal must have had a beginning; and whatever has a beginning, must be *caused* to begin; that is,

must be an *effect*, and an effect is never as great as the *cause* which produces it. Now, if God is not eternal, he must have been brought into being; for nothing is *self-produced*, and if God was *produced*, then is he inferior to that which produced him, and hence can not be *supreme*, and of course can not be God.

From this, it will appear that *self-existence* is a necessary concomitant of *eternity*. God is eternally *self-existent*; existing from everlasting, he was not produced. He is the one only self-existent Jehovah *before* all, by the necessity of his being; *above* all, by the infinity of his power; and *beyond* all, by the ubiquity of his spiritual essence. Wondrous being! Well may angels and archangels veil their faces in thy presence, and look upon themselves as less than nothing in thy sight; and well may the whole world of created intelligences exclaim:

“O God, thou bottomless abyss!
 Thee to perfection who can know?
 O height immense! what words suffice
 Thy countless attributes to show!
Eternity thy fountain was,
 Which, like thee, no beginning knew.
 Thou wast ere time began its race,
 Ere glowed with stars the ethereal blue.
 Greatness unspeakable is thine;
 Greatness, whose undiminished ray
 Shall brightly glow when short-lived worlds are lost —
 Shall shine when heaven and earth are fled away.”

III. *The next perfection of the Divine nature which we are here to consider, is*

UNCHANGEABLENESS.

That this must be an attribute of the true God, even reason plainly declares ; for, though God were INFINITE and ETERNAL, though he were possessed of all the other glorious qualities of an absolutely *perfect* nature, yet if it were *possible* for him to *change* — to become to-morrow something different from what he is to-day — you will perceive that this fact alone would unsettle the whole system, and remove every ground of confidence and hope. *To be PERFECT*, God must not only *now* be what he is, but he must *ever so remain*.

This attribute may be defined as that “*perfect constancy by which God is infinitely free from any actual or possible change*,” and through the possession of which property all may have the utmost assurance that he must ever remain as he now is.

In his *infinity* and *eternity*, God is *unchangeable*. If he is now *infinite* in his knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, so will he ever be the same, in all these glorious perfections. What he says of himself is, and must forever remain, most true : “*I am the Lord ; I change not*,” and what the Apostle James affirms, is to be accepted without the slightest qualification ; he is “the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Not only is there not the *substance*, or reality, of change in him, but not even the *faintest resemblance* to it ; not the *shadow*, not the slightest approach, toward mutability. Well may Job cry, “He is of one mind, and who can turn him ? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.”

Moreover, *this* attribute of the true God is clearly inferable from his *absolute perfection*. How can *perfection change*? A *perfect* being will not act without a motive; and the only motive which could induce God to change, would be a desire to become better than he is. But this is impossible, for he is perfect now. Or the argument may be stated thus: A change in God must either be for the better or for the worse. But he can not be made better, and his perfect *holiness* precludes the possibility of a change for the worse. He must, therefore, remain forever the same — “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.” All *beneath* him; all *but* he, may change. Angels may sin and fall; man may become ungrateful — trample upon the law of his maker, and cease from happiness; the sun, the moon, the stars, the solid earth itself, yea the whole material universe, may undergo ten thousand transformations; may be subject to ten thousand changes, and at length crumble back into that chaos from which, at first, by the omnipotent fiat of Jehovah, they were called; but amid all — unaffected, unmoved, unshaken — the *infinite, eternal, and unchangeable* Jehovah, will remain the sovereign still, doing after his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, none staying his hand, or saying unto him, what doest thou? O what words are these! INFINITE! ETERNAL! UNCHANGEABLE!

How little of all that these words really contain, can we grasp by repeating them to our ears! An

INFINITE being ; an ETERNAL being ; an UNCHANGEABLE being ! How little, after all, do we learn of God by the declaration that these are among the attributes *essential* to his nature !

There are, however, certain solemn, practical thoughts, suggested by the contemplation of these high and incomprehensible titles. And,

1. *What a rebuke does human pride receive in the presence of such a being as this !* Where is the mortal who dares lift his head with vanity and pride in the presence of one so glorious ! There have been — there now are — those who indulge this most unseemly, most unbecoming passion of the human soul. Kings and emperors have put on airs, in the presence of their fellow worms, and have succeeded in dazzling, for a time, with a false glare, the eyes of their infatuated followers and dependents. How manifest their folly, in the light of the great themes here discussed ! In view of God's *infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness*, of what can a created being be proud ? Creatures of a day ! frail, dying mortals ! dependent for every successive *breath* upon Omnipotence, what madness, to indulge in an inordinate self-esteem ; in conceit ; in vanity ! *Humility* alone becomes us. We should never forget that

“ Heaven's gates are not so highly arched
As princes' palaces ; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees.”

2. *How terrible should this God appear to the obdurate sinner ?* Behold him ! *Infinite in his knowledge !* Can you conceal your sins from him ?

Infinite in his power! Can you hope to escape his grasp? *Unchangeable in his holiness!* Can you hope that he will ever look with less abhorrence than now upon your depravity? *Unchangeable in his justice!* Can you ever expect him to become blind to your violations of his holy law? Having uttered that just and righteous decree, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God," can you expect him to retract? No; no. In God there is, there can be no change. If the sinner is ever saved, the change must be in him. His heart must be renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He must become a "new creature" in Christ; old things must pass away, and all things must become new. He must learn to love what he now hates, and to hate what he now loves. Christ must be formed in him "the hope of glory," and the Holy Ghost must make of his regenerated soul an abiding resting-place. Then, and not before, will the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable One, visit him with the consolations of Divine grace, and lavish upon him the riches of his exhaustless love. But,

3. *How comforting these views of Deity to those who have fled to God in Christ!* We can now boast (and it is not an idle boast) that *every* perfection of an *infinite, eternal, and unchangeable* God, is pledged for our redemption. Precious, precious thought! We can now exclaim, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Every child of God can say, "*My Father is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable*; what need I fear? Is he not able to verify every promise

made in my behalf? How can Satan harm me, with *such* a God to baffle his infernal machinations? What can man accomplish, since I have man's *Maker, Governor, and Judge*, upon my side?" Surely, it was not idle declamation in Paul to ask, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is GOD that *justifieth*; who is he that condemneth?" Christian! "Be joyful in the Lord," for "THE ETERNAL GOD IS THY REFUGE, AND UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS."

CHAPTER XIX.

“What our dim eyes could never see,
Is plain and naked to thy sight;
What thickest darkness veils, to thee
Shines clearly as the morning light.
In light thou dwell’st; light that no shade,
No variation ever knew.
Heaven, earth, and hell, stand all displayed,
And open to thy piercing view.”

From the German, by J. WESLEY.

“O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of
God!” — ROMANS xi. 33.

HAVING considered, in the last chapter, those three wonderful properties of the Divine nature — *infinity*, *eternity*, and *unchangeableness* — we come to discuss, in this, the

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

of God: two of his glorious perfections, the consideration of which can but be of exceeding interest to every thoughtful mind.

Many writers upon the Divine perfections choose to treat these two attributes as one — regarding the *knowledge* of God as comprehended in his *wisdom*. This view, as we have seen in a previous chapter, is

taken by the Westminster Divines — confessedly very high authority — and by Dr. Dwight and other eminent writers upon theology. Notwithstanding this opinion, we have no hesitation in taking the ground that these two attributes are clearly distinct perfections. *Knowledge* is simply an *acquaintance with facts and existences*, and may be termed *intelligence* or *information*; while *wisdom* is that power or quality of the mind *which enables its possessor to make the best possible use of what he knows*. A person may be distinguished for his *information* upon all subjects, and yet be devoid of *true wisdom*, having no faculty for using his information for the promotion of good or useful ends. Indeed, “*knowledge* is the simple apprehension of things as they are, just as the eye perceives the objects presented to it; while *wisdom* is the arrangement of our ideas in proper order, and in such a train as to produce some useful, practical result.” (Dr. Dick.) No man can be truly wise without knowledge; but we may see every day proof upon every hand, that men may have vast stores of knowledge, without a particle of wisdom. We choose, therefore, to treat as different properties of the Divine nature, qualities which are in their very essence susceptible of such a marked distinction.

I. That God is possessed of *infinite knowledge*, the Scriptures emphatically declare. We are told that “his eye is in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” He is said to be a God “who *knoweth all things*.” It is also declared that nothing is hidden from him. One sacred writer, addressing

Jehovah, says, "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee." Before thee, "the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

That we may aid the reader in reaching out after this wondrous property of the Divine Being, and assist him in grasping a moiety of its greatness, let us notice,

1. *That the knowledge of God is intuitive.* In other words, it is not, like the knowledge of man, *acquired*. God was never a learner. He can not know to-day what he did not know yesterday. His *knowledge*, like his *power*, or *justice*, or *goodness*, is perfect at every moment of time. To say that God can know to-morrow what he does not know to-day, is to affirm that he is to-day *ignorant* of something; and ignorance is not consonant with perfection. All the past, all the present, and all the future, is fully known to him at every moment of existence. Every thing which *has* been, which *is now*, or which ever *will* be, or which *can* be, is entirely and presently known to this glorious One.

And this intuitive perception of all things actual or possible, is most clearly a *necessity* of the Divine nature. For God *not* to know, or to cease to know, the slightest thing occurring, or to occur, in the whole circuit of the ages, or in any part of his vast dominions, would be tantamount to his ceasing to rule as the sovereign of the universe. That Arminian divine, therefore, who, to sustain an argument against predestination, asserted that there were certain things which God chose *not to know*, gave

utterance to a dogma antagonistic to the very being of God. As well can it be said that God chooses *not* to be *omnipotent*; *not* to be *perfectly just*; *not* to be *absolutely holy*, as that he chooses not to have a perfect knowledge of all things. It is, then, among the distinguishing features of this attribute, that it is *intuitive* and *necessary*. But,

2. *God's knowledge comprehends a thorough acquaintance with the essence of all things.* It is not like *our* perceptions, confined to the outward properties, or external conditions of things. We can only see what is *outward*. In the *lives of men*, for instance, we can know only what is on the surface. The *secret springs* of action, the *subtile, internal powers*, at work far down in the soul, the influences molding, controlling, guiding — unknown and unappreciated, it may be, by the man himself — these are *not* open to *our* perception. We may form shrewd conjectures concerning these motive powers; we may judge in some cases correctly, touching the springs of human action; the influences lying back of human conduct; and yet, it is with us, after all, only *conjecture* and *speculation*. But with God, all is open and fully revealed — as plain and clear as noonday. "His knowledge," in the language of inspiration, "is infinite." Motives, purposes, plans, hidden designs, the very germ and essence of all things, of all acts, are to him like the open page of a plainly written book. To him, nothing is *dark*; nothing *mysterious*; nothing *complicated*; nothing *unintelligible*. Every object, not only, but every

quality of every object, and every thing which can belong to it, or which can be said of it; is plain and open, "before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." What a *wonderful* attribute! All-comprehending, penetrating, infinite, perfect! Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "*Such knowledge is too high for me.*" But,

3. *The knowledge of God comprehends all the relations of things to, and their bearings upon each other.* He knows fully the *tendencies* of events; the consequences to which they point; the results which they will develop. Of course, therefore, God is never, like us, taken by surprise. "He knows the end from the beginning;" knows it wholly, knows it fully, in all its bearings and contingencies. He is, therefore, never disappointed. However any course of conduct may result, to whatever conclusions it may lead, they were yet all fully comprehended by him. He is, therefore, never left to what we call *conjecture*. He is never in doubt. With him, no uncertainty envelops the future. Just how men, and communities, and kingdoms, and nations, will act, and just what consequences will follow from their actions, and just what bearings those acts will have upon the destiny of earth — all this is present to the infinite perception of this wonderful Being. And all this is known *fully, clearly, perfectly, truly*, to God, *now, not only*, but all *was* known to him, *from all eternity*. There never was a moment in all the existence of God, in the past, when all that *had* been, and all that *was* to be, in their *bearings*, and *rela-*

tions, and tendencies, was not fully present before him. How do our finite understandings stagger under the burden of such an incomprehensible fact; and how fully are we now prepared to respond to the inspired declarations: "The Lord is a God of *knowledge*." "He is greater than our heart, and *knoweth all things*." But,

4. *The knowledge of God embraces a thorough and comprehensive acquaintance with all worlds and with all conditions of being.* This earth, and this life, with all that is comprehended in them, are not only fully known to him, but ETERNITY, with all its solemn interests, heaven and hell, angels and redeemed saints, devils and lost men; all that is found in angelic and satanic minds: the hopes and aspirations of the one, the schemes and machinations of the other; all that the world of bliss or the world of woe contains, lies open to the all-knowing mind of Jehovah. There is no pinnacle in the heavenly world so high, no cavern in the regions of despair so deep, that God's infinite perception does not reach to it, and fully comprehend it. It is not, then, *human* beings, and their affairs alone — however numerous and complicated those beings and those affairs may be; it is not the whole history of earth, all that has been, is now, or that will be; it is not the things actual or possible, pertaining to *all* worlds throughout the whole universe of God, and for all time, which are the subjects of the Divine knowledge — the objects of the Divine intelligence; but *all created beings*, angels and devils; all *possible*, all

conceivable orders of beings and things, with all that concerns them for time and for eternity. *Every thing created by God* must be fully known to God; and as he created all things, *visible* and *invisible*, so all must be included in the grasp of his infinite intelligence. All his works, in all parts of his dominion, both of matter and of mind, both the physical and spiritual, are *fully* known to this glorious Being. But,

5. *This attribute of God includes a perfect knowledge of his OWN GLORIOUS PERFECTIONS.* This is the most wonderful thing that can be said of it. *God knows himself perfectly.* Were this not the case, we need not be told that God's knowledge is *infinite*; for a *finite* knowledge would have been sufficient to comprehend finite existences. But God himself is *infinite*, and hence an *infinite* knowledge is needed to comprehend him. *Infinity* alone can *grasp infinity*, and the *infinite God* is alone an object really worthy the grasp of an *infinite* intelligence. All this is more than hinted at in that declaration of Scripture, "What man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God, knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." If this be true, as it undoubtedly is, then a *perfect* comprehension of Deity is only to be looked for in *Deity*. God only can *know* God in his fullness and perfection. The Son and the Holy Spirit know God the Father and each other fully. In part — to a degree — they may reveal him to us, but it is only a beggarly acquaintance with God, to which, with our

finite powers, we can aspire. We can only look, and wonder, and adore, while we sigh for a more perfect acquaintance with the glorious source of all light, and life, and love.

And now, by a review of these five particulars, we may gain something of an estimate of this wondrous attribute. It is, in its very nature, an *intuitive perception* of all actual or possible things, beings, existences and events; it embraces a thorough acquaintance with the *essence of things*—in other words, it is *all-comprehending* and *penetrating*, as well as intuitive. It also comprehends all the *relations* and *bearings* of all powers, circumstances, and events—their relations to *each other*, and to *final results* and *ends*; it also *covers all worlds and all existences, in time*, not only, but *in eternity*; and, most remarkable of all, it includes a thorough knowledge of *God himself*—thus culminating in the grandest of all attainments, *the perfect comprehension of the infinite Jehovah*. O wonderful perfection! How is the glory of the Divine nature enhanced in our estimation, by this review—brief and imperfect though it be?

II. Let us now turn to consider briefly *the wisdom of one whose knowledge is so wonderful*.

By the wisdom of God, we understand that attribute *through which God chooses infallibly the best and highest ends in the exercise of his sovereignty, and through which he adopts the most perfect means for the accomplishment of those ends*. The one grand end which God has in view, in all his works, is *his*

own glory. Infinite wisdom, from all eternity, chose this end, and in promoting and furthering it, in advancing it from generation to generation, and from age to age, the same infinite wisdom is manifested.

God displays his perfections, as you know,

1. IN THE WORKS OF CREATION.

2. IN THE WORKS OF PROVIDENCE. And,

3. IN THE WORKS OF GRACE.

Need we pause to designate particularly the *infinite wisdom* of God as exhibited in creation? Cast your eye abroad throughout the whole material universe, and behold the *grandeur*, the *glory*, the *harmony*, the *beauty*, the *order*, every where exhibited. Can you not say, with the Psalmist, in view of all, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork?" Look again into *every department* of being—into the animal, the vegetable, the mineral kingdoms. Are we not met with the wondrous display of *wisdom* every where? Behold the striking adaptation of one part to another—and all to the one grand purpose chosen in the Divine wisdom—the *glory of God!* See how the earth; the air; the water; the change of seasons; the alternations of day and night; the summer's heat and winter's cold; the productions of the soil; the wealth of the mine; the treasures of the deep; set forth continually, in their admirable uses and adaptations, the wisdom of him who created them! *Who dares arise, and with impious hand write "FOOLISHNESS" upon any part of the material universe?*

And then, in the *works of providence*, what consummate skill and wisdom! Look at the *moral government* of the universe; the administration of strict justice; the awards to virtue; the punishment of vice; the infliction of discipline upon individuals and nations, in the form of sickness, disease, war, pestilence, and famine; and all directed, controlled, and measured with an infinitely wise and righteous ordering, so that all bear upon the one great end, *the glory of God!* Who, but the most insane and impious, can find fault with *God's moral government*, or accuse him of a want of the most consummate wisdom in all here wrought by his hands?

And then, in the domain of GRACE, how conspicuously does the *wisdom of God* shine forth! Here, infinite justice is to be satisfied. The claims of a righteous law are to be met and fully answered. The sinner is to be *forgiven*, and yet in such a way, and upon such grounds, that the *holiness of God* shall receive no *stain*, and the strictest *equity* no *shock*. Then, this *forgiven*, this *justified* sinner, is, in some way, to be *sanctified*, and made meet for eternal companionship with the highest and holiest intelligences in heaven; nay, *with God himself*. And all this is to be done by God in the exercise of a most perfect sovereignty, and yet in entire consistency with man's proper freedom as a moral and accountable being. O what a work! Who is sufficient for it? Who can do all this? Whose *wisdom* is equal to the task? *God alone* has the wisdom to conceive a plan, whereby he can be *just*, and yet *justify the guilty*. An atoning

sacrifice having *infinite merit* is selected — that sacrifice, GOD'S OWN SON. He assumes the nature of this fallen race. He humbles himself beneath the law for them. He dies to satisfy the just demands of that law upon them. They are thus relieved from condemnation; from the wrath which abides upon the ungodly. And *now* their *sanctification* begins. The Holy Spirit descends upon them, and takes up his abode in their willing hearts. God, the Holy Ghost, works within them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. One after another, the corruptions of the carnal nature are expelled. The soul is made ripe for heaven, and in due time is admitted, without blot or stain, to eternal felicity.

And all this is through the consummate workings of *infinite wisdom*. This is the theater of its *crowning triumphs*. It is here seen to be more wonderful, even, than when displayed in the construction of worlds, or the government of a universe. As the salvation of the soul is the grandest of all the ends to be promoted during the ages, so here do we find displays of wisdom more illustrious than in either, or in all the other operations of the Divine hand. Hence, it is in reference to the scheme of redemption, that the Scriptures declare that "GOD HAS ABOUNDED toward us in all WISDOM and prudence," and that in the work of grace is made known "unto the principalities and powers through the church, the MANIFOLD WISDOM of God."

And now, in conclusion, let the reader consider

how many and how weighty are the lessons taught us by this discussion.

1. *How is all self-gratulation over even the highest human attainments in knowledge and wisdom checked and reproved by this review!* Alas! poor short-sighted, ignorant worm! what are all your boasted acquisitions, in comparison with God's infinite perfections? You have made some advancement in knowledge; you have entered, possibly, the arcana of nature, and penetrated some of her hidden cloisters; you have grappled with mathematics, and mastered her profound problems; you have soared to the stars, and reaching out into space, have counted a few of the shining worlds wheeling there, have learned the names which have been given them, and become familiar with the laws which govern their majestic movements; you have made the human mind your study, and unfolded to such a depth the mysteries of spiritual being, that men have stood awe-struck in view of your far-reaching speculations; and yet, how mean, how poor, how contemptible, all your attainments, when contrasted with God's *infinite knowledge and wisdom*. In the comparison, all the attainments of a Bacon, a Newton, and an Edwards even, shrink into nothingness. "Where is boasting then?"

2. *How are the impenitent admonished by this discussion?* Is it possible to *hide sin* from a God of *infinite knowledge*? Can you bury it so deeply in the recesses of your bosom that he shall be ignorant of its existence? You *may* deceive your fellow-men;

your nearest neighbor ; your dearest friend ; your father who begat you ; the mother who bore you ; the brother or the sister who drew sustenance with you from the same breast ; the children of your own loins ; the *wife* of your own bosom even, may be kept in utter ignorance of your depravity and sin. *Not so that God with whom you have to do.* He knows you altogether ; your heart lies as fully open before him as the page upon which your eye now rests. Confess, then, your every sin ; turn from every evil way, and with a soul profoundly convicted, cry, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*"

3. Then, too, how comforting to the children of God to know that a being *infinite* in *knowledge* and *wisdom*, is fully enlisted to secure their salvation. What if *they* be ignorant ? What if the pathway they tread be at times dark and dreary ? What if they be often cast down, and sadly bewildered by perplexities and fears ? God's infinite knowledge and wisdom are pledged to them. He foresees, and has provided for all contingencies in their history. His *knowledge* grasps all their future in its minutest details, and his *wisdom* has ordered and adjusted every event to the promotion of his own honor and their eternal good. Let the righteous confide in these Divine perfections in the darkest, gloomiest hours, knowing that that was no idle boast of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, when he exclaimed, "All things work together for good to them that love God ; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Let them take it home to their hearts as a most glorious assurance "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor breadth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What an assurance! How full of blessedness to him whose soul is stayed upon God! For this, as for all the other gifts of his grace, let every soul exclaim —

"TO GOD ONLY WISE BE GLORY,

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST FOREVER,

AMEN."

CHAPTER XX.

“Nature, faint emblem of Omnipotence!
Shaped by his hand, the shadow of his light,
The veil in which he wraps his majesty,
And through whose mantling folds he deigns to show
Of his mysterious, awful attributes,
And dazzling splendors, all man’s feeble thought
Can grasp uncrushed, or vision bear unquenched.”—STREET.

“The mighty God.”—ISAIAH ix. 6.

WE are brought, in this chapter, to the consideration of the *infinite power of God*. This attribute is often, in Scripture, termed “*might*,” and one of the very common designations of Jehovah is the “Mighty,” or “Almighty God.” This perfection is also, by theological writers, named “*Omnipotence*” — a term compounded of two Latin words, which signify, *all-power*.

So fully is infinite power claimed, in Scripture, to belong to God, and so generally is it conceded among men, as an undoubted attribute of Deity, that it is scarcely worth while to introduce a formal array of proof-texts in this place to show that this is one of the Divine perfections. It is, however, important

that we should have this great truth deeply impressed upon our minds. It is important that it become to us a *truth ever present*, a *consciousness*, as it were, entering into every thought, and influencing every *act* of our lives. To this end, let us consider some of the methods in which it displays itself, in the works of God. And,

1. The infinite power of God is displayed *in the fact of creation*. That *matter* is not eternal, is now universally conceded among intelligent Christians. If matter is not eternal, then was it produced from nothing. This is precisely what Scripture affirms: "In the beginning, God *created* the heavens and the earth." They had not existed before. From all eternity, they were not. At length, God spake, and it was done. All the material existences in the universe sprang into being. Worlds and systems of worlds, appeared at the call of God. Pause now, for a moment, and try to grasp this great thought. It is possible to conceive of God as existing alone. Nothing has being but himself. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the three—one Jehovah exists alone in the universe. All is vacancy; all unoccupied space. Suddenly a creative fiat goes forth from God, and immediately that space, but now wholly void of all existences, is filled. Worlds upon worlds at once appear. From *nothing* all things come. Than this, it is impossible to conceive of a greater exhibition of power. The *fact* of creation must forever stand a most transcendent proof that our God is indeed Almighty. But,

2. The *mode* of creation, as well as the *fact* of it, illustrates the infinite power of Jehovah. The whole creative work is effected by the *word* of God: "He *spake*, and it was done; he *commanded*, and it stood fast." "Through faith," says Paul, "we understand that the worlds were framed, by the *word of God*, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear." It was not by a long and painful process; not by labor and toil; not by the exercise of all his strength and skill, in successive efforts, that God effected the creative work; but by a single exercise of his will; a single utterance of his lips. Wonderful beyond all expression, the power which is adequate to this! He has but to say, "let it be," and it is. But,

3. The omnipotence of God is displayed in the *variety* and *number* of the objects created by him. It is of course readily admitted that the power adequate to the production of one object from nothing, be it great or small, is sufficient for the creation of any number; and yet the fact that the one creative fiat brought into being myriads upon myriads of objects, of all conceivable form, size, character, and use, enhances our admiration. Consider, if you please, the sun, which is the center of our solar system. What a wonderful object this! Though *ninety-five millions* of miles from our earth, yet it throws its inexhaustible rays of light and heat in all directions across the vast intervening space, warming, illuminating, and vitalizing all things with which they come in contact. What a manifes-

tation of *power* — of *infinite* power — have we in the fact that this glowing orb was produced, with all its conditions, laws, and beneficent uses, *from nothing*, in an instant of time, by the *simple word*, or expressed wish of Jehovah. But then, we must consider that this sun is the center of a glorious *system* of worlds — of which our earth is one — which revolves around it, deriving light, and life, and order, from its inexhaustible influences. Now, to look at this *one sun*, and this *one system* of worlds, and to remember how and whence they were produced, certainly excites in our hearts the profoundest emotions of wonder and awe. But what shall we say when it is considered that our present telescopic range reveals, within its circuit, not less than *one hundred millions* of these suns, each as glorious as ours, and each the center of a system of worlds as numerous as ours? And then, let it be considered, further, that were it possible for us to go with our largest telescopes to the most distant planet yet revealed to us, and from that, as a stand-point, look forth into the regions beyond, millions upon millions of new suns, and new systems, would be disclosed to our wondering gaze; and all, all, spoken into being in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. When we think of all this, how are we lost in wonder! The one creative fiat produced not *one*, nor *one thousand*, nor *one million*, but *myriads* upon *myriads* of worlds, with all their peculiarities and glories, dazzling us with their brilliancy and beauty, as they suddenly

appear in their orbits, whirling with an inconceivable velocity, through the vast fields of space,

“Forever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine.”

If we were in doubt as to the infinite power of God, we certainly must find convincing proof of its existence in the *number, variety, and character* of the material worlds, which owe their origin to him. “Lift up your eyes on high,” says Isaiah, “and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by their names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.” It has been ascertained by recently constructed telescopes of great power, “that a line extending from two extreme nebulae, in opposite parts of the heavens, stretches over a space through which a ray of light can not travel in less than sixty millions of years. Through the immense sphere of which this is the diameter, it is estimated that millions upon millions of orbs, not only, but of *congregations* of orbs, are scattered with gorgeous profusion; and how far beyond this prodigious sphere no man knoweth; but the probability is that it bears but the proportion of a grain of sand to our globe, compared to the outer boundaries of the universe of God; yet all equally replenished and crowded with galaxies and diversified forms of existence. The world we inhabit, large as it is, with its mountains and valleys, its vast oceans and continents, is small compared with other globes

belonging to our system. The planet Jupiter contains a volume of matter equal to near *thirteen hundred* of our earths; but the sun is *three hundred and fifty-five thousand* times larger than our world. Overpowering as this magnitude is, it is diminutive compared with the size of some of the fixed stars. The star Sirius, is, with good reason, supposed to be equal in size to many of our suns; but the solid contents of the star called Vega, are estimated to be *fifty-four thousand eight hundred and seventy-two times* larger than the solid contents of the sun. The magnitude of such a globe is altogether overpowering to the human imagination, and it baffles every effort to approximate to a distinct conception of an object of such amplitude and splendor. Yet we have reason to believe that there are millions upon millions of such orbs scattered through the spacious universe. The number of telescopic stars in the Milky Way has been estimated at *eighteen millions*; but who can limit the number? And it must be remembered that the Milky Way is only *one* collection of stars, and seems to form a type of thousands of similar clusters or galaxies, which are seen faintly looming in regions too remote for distinct conception. Sir John Herschel himself has observed two thousand five hundred nebulæ, or clusters of stars; and what multitudes more may be observed by the superior power of Lord Rosse's telescope; and what further numbers more may yet be discovered through similar instruments in other hemispheres, we are unable to determine. In some of those already examined, the

crowds of stars are found so dense that "ten or twenty thousand stars appear compacted or wedged together in a space not larger than a tenth of that covered by the moon, and presenting, in its center, one blaze of light." *

Surely, in view of such a wondrous universe, spoken into being by a simple fiat of Jehovah, we may well concur in the declaration of Scripture, "Power belongeth unto God." But again,

4. *We behold a striking display of the infinite power of God in the wonderful forces of nature.* Power is one of the properties of the God-appointed elements. The *winds* give unmistakable evidence of this when careering over land and sea, in the terrific simoom, tornado, or hurricane. What an emblem of power is the dashing current of Niagara, or the resistless sweep of the swollen Mississippi, Missouri, or Amazon! How easily does the heaving *earthquake* shatter into fragments the most firmly based monuments of human skill and genius! With what a sudden, terrible destruction, does the frightful *avalanche* sweep before it every obstacle, burying in its desolating track, villages, and hamlets, and cities, pausing not for the piteous cry of infancy, or the despairing groans of old age! And then, in the irresistible *thunderbolt*, what a mighty power is lodged! What can stand before it, when, hissing with its hidden fires, it leaps from the charged cloud to the earth, rending, in its descent, the gnarled monarch of the forest, or dashing to the ground the

* Dr. W. Cooke on the Deity, pp. 267, 268.

marble towers of church or capitol, or the rocky walls of the citadel or fort, deemed secure against all the attacks of man-made engines of destruction ! The irresistible power of *heat* and *steam*, too ; the might with which *powder*, and all explosive *mixtures* and *gases* are charged ; and the destructive power of every element of nature when unrestrained by a mightier arm than man's ! All this is well known to every thoughtful observer. And whence all this *might*, this *power*, this *force*, so conspicuous in the elements ? From whence did they derive it ? All the power you see in nature is but a faint, a very faint *reflection* of what resides in the arm of the God of nature. From him, all this might is derived. Were not *infinite power* one of the attributes of Deity, nothing of this would be observable in the works of his hands.

And it is worthy of remark just here, that we gain glimpses of the *infinitude*, the *limitless* character of God's power, in these exhibitions of it in the elements. When the volcano, the earthquake, or the thunderbolt, has done its work, we are led, in looking at the ruins, to exclaim, " This is but a *part* of what the *power* lodged in the elements *might* have accomplished, had God so willed." We feel that the irresistible force which opened the earth and swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their sinful company, was sufficient, had it been the will of the Lord, to have *destroyed the whole host of Israel*. When the fire descended from heaven and burned up the cities of the plain with their guilty inhabitants,

we have not a doubt but that, in like manner, every city of the old world might have been destroyed. There is, in fact, seen and believed to be a *reserve force*, an *unexpended power*, in all these cases, which point clearly to the *infinitude* of God's might. No one will be rash enough to claim that in any exhibition of power, by the elements, since the world began, *all* was accomplished which might have been. We thus are clearly directed to that Being whose power is like all his other attributes—without bounds or limitations.

Leaving, however, this comparatively restricted sphere of observation, and taking a wider view of the universe, we will find in the same general direction, manifestations of power absolutely overwhelming. *The whole boundless universe is in motion.* So far as we know, each globe which composes it is in constant revolution upon its own axis, whirling round at a rate more or less rapid, while it has at the same time an *onward* movement through space, which causes it to perform revolutions in fixed times around its central sun. Thus our earth makes one revolution on its own axis in twenty-four hours, causing bodies on its surface at the equator, to move at the rate of about *one thousand miles per hour*; while the whole planet is whirling around the sun at the rate of as many miles *per minute*. Even this velocity—one thousand miles per minute—is almost incredible to us; and yet this is as nothing in comparison with the speed of other heavenly bodies. It is estimated that the planet Mercury, and one of the

stars in Cassiopeiæ, move at the rate of about *two thousand* miles per minute. A comet which appeared in sixteen hundred and eighty was found to flash through space at the astonishing rate of *one thousand three hundred and sixty-six* miles in a minute; or *more than two thousand two hundred and seventy-five miles per second*. If we admit, with some philosophers, that light is *material*, then we have in this element an example of a movement at the rate of twelve million miles per minute, or *two hundred thousand* miles per second. And yet, even *this* is moderate, when compared with the velocity of a double star, number sixty-one, Cygni, which is propelled at the terrific speed of twenty millions of millions of miles per annum, or *about six hundred and thirty-five thousand miles* IN A SECOND OF TIME. Of course, no human mind can form any proper conception of such speed as this; and back of all, lies the infinite power of God which is constantly exerted in propelling these innumerable worlds through their vast circuits at this incomprehensible velocity. Philosophers speak of the *centrifugal* and *centripetal* forces—the one driving these vast worlds forward in the direction of a straight line; the other constantly bending them from their onward course, so that the path they describe in the heavens is orbicular—but the *Christian* sees in these, only the displays of God's *Almightiness*, by which he “bringeth forth Mazaroth in his season, guideth Arcturus and his sons, and appointeth the ordinances of heaven.”

Let the reader pause now for a moment, and look at these facts. Think of a universe absolutely boundless in extent, filled with *myriads of worlds*, and *systems of worlds*, the whole whirling in inconceivable grandeur and glory, and with a velocity and complication of motion utterly incomprehensible to us; and yet all these movements and evolutions produced by the *direct* and *continuous* exertion of *one single arm*. Wonderful beyond expression! Truly may the Psalmist exclaim, "The heavens declare the *glory* of God." But again,

5. We find the omnipotence of God displayed *in the preservation of all that he has created*. Two views have been taken of the relation of all created beings and objects to God. The first is, that having been brought into existence, they then continue to exist *without particular care*, until God, by a special exercise of his will, calls them away. The second view is, that *God exercises, during every moment of time, upon every object* of his vast dominions, a *preserving power*; and that, if he did not do this, they would sink, by virtue of their own weakness, *out of being*. This last, we believe to be the true view, and is the one which is sustained by Scripture. This is manifestly the sense in which the Apostle's words are to be taken, when he says, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." What is it to "*live*" in God, and to "*move*" in him, but to experience a constant manifestation of his preserving kindness in our behalf; to be *upheld* with his strength, and to have our being *prolonged* from day to day, by a

special exercise of his providence? This, it would seem, is the only proper construction to be put upon these words. And then, there is that other apostolic declaration, in which Christ, as God, is spoken of as "*upholding all things by the word of his power.*" This is certainly a work distinct from *creation*. To *uphold*, is to keep in being after an object is made. If Christ, as God, "*upholds all things by the word of his power,*" then must there be a *constant* and *unceasing exercise* of infinite power in behalf of every object in nature, or it would sink into nothingness, and be as though it had never been. If, then, we have no doubt that it required the power of an infinite being to *create* all things from nothing, we have no more doubt that it is a most signal display of omnipotence to *uphold* every hour, every moment, all that has thus been created. This exercise of preserving power has been called "*a continued creation.*" This expression presents, in some sense, a just view of the subject. There are forces at work in nature which continually tend to destroy. The process of decomposition and ruin is going on every hour. The action of the air, the heat, the moisture, tends to rottenness. Vegetation every where changes annually. Trees, shrubs, and plants, fall, and are soon mingled with the earth. Animals and men live for a little and then die, and return to their kindred dust. Even the solid crust of the earth's surface, and the granite of her mountains and her hills, feel the power of change, and are sensibly affected by the abrading tooth of time. Still there is a power *back*

of all, and *above* all, which is continually exercised in *repairing* the breaches made, in *supplying* the wastes effected, and in *restoring* the devastation wrought. This *power* must be *infinite* to *reach to*, and be exercised upon the *myriads upon myriads of objects throughout the entire universe of God*. And how soon, were not this power exercised, would the entire creation be wasted and destroyed ! The sun would ere long exhaust his store of rays, and cease to shine ; the vegetable kingdom would no longer exist ; animals, having no sustenance, would die ; man himself would become extinct, and the universe become one vast aceldama. With what propriety, then, does the Apostle declare, “ In him we *live*, and *move*, and *have our being*.” But yet again,

6. *God's infinite power is displayed in the moral government of the universe.*

Of this government, *intelligent* beings are the subjects — beings, too, who are *obstinate, refractory, and rebellious*. Men and devils, continually exercising all their arts ; all their powers ; to thwart the wise and beneficent purposes of Jehovah, are those with whom he is constantly in conflict. And yet, such is the power of God, that we have no doubt as to the *final* result. True, for wise purposes, God gives a certain freedom to the wicked. He allows their schemes to have a seeming success. Their evil passions break forth in robberies, thefts, murders, drunkenness, revelry, and debauchery, and for a time the world may be deluded with the thought that “ God does not see ; neither does he under-

stand." But suddenly the scene changes. Some terrible visitation of Divine wrath is poured out upon the guilty. War, pestilence, famine, in quick succession, descend, and men learn that there is *verily* a God who reigns in heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; a God who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, and who is the *certain avenger of his own righteous law*.

The history of the world affords many striking exhibitions of God's infinite power *as the moral governor* of the universe. We have the space, now, only to mention the overthrow of the antediluvian world with a flood; the destruction of the great dynasties of the early world—Assyria, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and Rome; and the degradation of Egypt from being a first-rate power, until it has become the basest of kingdoms. As regards modern nations and peoples, God's power may be seen in the preservation of the Jews and Arabs; while in strict accordance with prophecy, we have to-day the Mohamedan power tottering to its fall, in its chief representative—the sick man on the Bosphorus—the deadly wound of the beast unhealed, and the Pope of Rome seeking refuge from his own enraged and outraged children; while the influential nations are those which either profess or openly tolerate the pure Gospel of the Son of God. Surely, "Our God is Lord among the nations."

But lastly. This wondrous attribute of Jehovah is signally displayed in the glorious work of salvation.

To plant the Gospel in this sin-cursed earth; to

carry it forward from generation to generation, amid the most determined opposition ; to bring, through its agency, thousands and tens of thousands, both of Jews and Gentiles, to the knowledge of the truth ; to break down the strong opposition of the carnal heart ; to subdue its hatred ; to cause it to cast down its weapons of rebellion, and come, a subdued, meek, repentant suppliant, to the mercy seat ; and to do this, in the case of the millions who this hour rejoice before the throne in glory, as well as for the millions who are yet continued on the earth — making a multitude which no man can number ; to do all this by his own power, through Jesus Christ, is it not a glorious display of the almightiness of that God whose we are, and whom we serve ?

Remember, that in this great work of redemption, *God has done it all.* *He* devised the plan in the councils of eternity. *He* laid the corner-stones of hope, in the gift of his Son. *He* wrought the mighty deliverance for the guilty by rolling the burden of a world's crime over upon Christ. *He* gave the Spirit to be the illuminator of darkened minds ; the convictor of stubborn souls. *He* sent forth the Enochs and the Noahs, the Aarons and Ezras, the Isaiahs and Daniels of the old dispensation ; and the Peters and Pauls, the James and Johns, and Timothys of the new ; and upholding them by a continued exercise of his almighty grace, enabled them to blow the gospel trumpet, which, with no uncertain sound, has signalled the deliverance of man from spiritual death in all ages. *He* it is who has

ever been, by his Spirit, in the soul of every returning prodigal, strengthening his new-formed resolution to seek his father's house. He it is who has whispered encouragement to the faint and desponding, when ready to give up in despair. He it is who has been by every sick-bed, by every dying couch, from the time that Abel breathed out his martyr spirit, to the present moment, whispering peace and consolation to the redeemed in their passage through the dark pathway to glory. Yes; *every thing connected with, every thing pertaining to, the soul's salvation, since the world began to the present hour, is through the exercise — constant, unwearied, and sleepless — of that infinite power of which we treat.* And, Christian reader, when you stand upon Mount Zion, and join in the grand choral of eternity, *praise, unceasing praise, to the infinite power of God, for his triumphs in redemption, will be one of your highest, most exultant strains.*

And now two thoughts claim our attention in conclusion :

1. God's power is *infinite to save!* Will you trust it? You say you are a great sinner. What of it? Here is an ALMIGHTY *Deliverer!* Are you convinced of the infinitude of this power by the displays of it in creation and providence? Come and let it be exerted in your behalf, in the work of grace. Glorious as it is in the first two theaters of its operations, you will find it no less glorious in the latter. But,

2. If God's power is *infinite to save, it is also*

infinite *to destroy!* Can this be doubted? Do you hear the shouts of victory, of joy, of ecstasy, in heaven; and are these evidences of God's power to save? Listen, also; listen closely, and you shall hear, with equal distinctness, the wailings of despair in the world of woe; wailings which are the unmistakable evidences of God's power to punish his foes. O reader, be wise.

“SEEK YE THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND;
CALL YE UPON HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR; LET THE
WICKED FORSAKE HIS WAY, AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS
MAN HIS THOUGHTS, AND LET HIM RETURN UNTO THE
LORD, WHO WILL HAVE MERCY UPON HIM, AND
UNTO OUR GOD WHO WILL ABUNDANTLY
PARDON.”

CHAPTER XXI.

“Harps of eternity! begin the song:
Redeemed, and angel harps! begin to God,
Begin the anthem, ever sweet and new,
While I extol him, HOLY, just, and good,
Life, beauty, light, intelligence, and love!
Eternal, uncreated, infinite,
Unsearchable Jehovah! God of truth!
Maker, upholder, governor of all!”—POLLOCK.

“These things saith he that is holy.”—REV. iii. 7.

THE subject of this chapter is of transcendent solemnity. We have, in the preceding pages, contemplated many wondrous attributes of the Almighty: his infinity, eternity, unchangeableness, knowledge, wisdom, and power; and all are seen to be perfections, the consideration of which is well calculated to impress us with awe, and fill our minds with reverence for the Divine Being. But it is safe to say that the

HOLINESS OF GOD

is an excellence so peculiarly glorious, that it stands out with a special prominence in all our conceptions of Deity. So impressed with this have some writers

been, that instead of looking upon it as a single attribute standing alone — a quality by itself — they have been led to consider it, and speak of it, as the *combined luster and effulgence of all the other attributes, acting in harmonious union*. Others, again, have regarded it as a quality or property of the Divine nature, which, like *infinity*, characterizes all the other perfections of Deity, and imparts to each a peculiar excellency. Thus, in the language of an ingenious writer, “As holiness is the glory of the Godhead, so it is the glory of *every perfection* in the Godhead. As his power is the *strength* of all the perfections, so his holiness is the *beauty* of them all. As all would be weak without almightiness to back them, so all would be uncomely without holiness to adorn them. Should this perfection be sullied, all the rest would lose their glory ; just as the instant the sun should lose its light, that instant would it lose its *heat*, its *strength*, its *generative* and *quickenings* virtue. As *sincerity* is the luster of every grace in the Christian, so is holiness the splendor of every attribute in the Godhead. His justice is holy justice ; his wisdom is a holy wisdom ; his arm of power a holy arm.” *

It follows, then, necessarily, that all the attributes of Deity, being characterized by holiness ; this being, as it were, a distinguishing trait, or property, of them all, every thing he does, every thing he says, nay, every thought of his mind, must be holy. His purposes must be holy purposes ; his decrees holy

* Charnock.

decrees; and every thing which emanates from him, must, like himself, be holy. In any view, then, that we take of the Divine Being, his *holiness* will stand prominently forth, and be the distinguishing peculiarity which first meets our admiring gaze. We may dwell for a time with admiration upon his *power*; his *infinity* may elicit our astonishment; his *knowledge* and *wisdom* may excite our wonder; but before his matchless HOLINESS, we are disposed to fall in deepest adoration, and cry, with angels and archangels, "Holy, holy, holy art thou, Lord God almighty; the whole earth is full of thy glory."

In contemplating this wonderful perfection of the Divine nature, we remark,

1. *That it may be considered as the absence of all evil.* It is an entire freedom from the slightest taint of impurity or sin. While, without question, the infinite knowledge of God brings him into a perfect acquaintance with all sin; with all the evil there is or can be in the universe; still none of this attaches to, or *can*, by any possibility, become a part of the Holy One of Israel. By his omnipresence, he is certainly forever with the wicked; upon their right hand and upon their left; continually beholding the evil and the good; yet he remains wholly free from all contamination.

Of this it is, of course, not easy for us to conceive. Constituted as we are, contact with sin is almost certain defilement. We are continually demonstrating, in our bitter experience, that no one can "take fire into his bosom and not be burned." We see so

constantly this liability to corruption from contact with surrounding impurity, that it is all but impossible for us to realize that *our God* can *know* all sin ; *see* all sin ; be *around it*, and *with it*, constantly, by virtue of his necessary omnipresence, and yet be, and for ever remain, without the slightest contamination. Yet so it is.

We have, as you know, in the earth-life of Jesus Christ, a beautiful and striking exemplification of this truth. He was brought constantly into contact with sin. He saw every form of evil. His ears were polluted with curses and blasphemies. He had cognizance of all forms of corruption and vice ; and yet the record is, that he was "*holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners.*" He was tempted in all points, like as we are, "*yet without sin.*" Even that wonderful contact with Satan himself, in the wilderness of temptation, left him without the slightest mark of defilement.

Now what we know to have been true of Christ, is true also of all the persons in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit, as we read, enters the regenerate soul, fights a mighty battle with its sins, drives them out, and makes that soul his resting-place. And yet, he is still the HOLY GHOST. Contact with sin corrupts him not. The immaculate purity of the Godhead can not be affected in the least by defilement. A diamond may lie amid the filth of the mine for centuries, and yet lose not one particle of its luster. The foul fogs of a thousand swamps may rise to the sun, and yet not a single ray be shorn of its glory.

Fishes may swim in the briny ocean for years, and yet retain all their natural freshness.

Our first remark, then, is that the holiness of God includes *perfect freedom* from the slightest evil; that this is a necessity of his being; and that he never can become contaminated, though constantly in contact, by virtue of his omniscience and omnipresence, with vice and corruption in all its forms. But,

2. *The holiness of the Divine nature is the assured possession of every grace and virtue.* It is not merely something *negative*, as *freedom from evil*; the *want* of impurity, or the *absence* of even the *remotest inclination or liability to evil*; but it is the *possession* of that transcendent excellence, rectitude and uprightness, as a necessary element of his character, which secures the *utmost purity* in God himself, and in all his *thoughts, purposes, decrees and acts*. "To call God holy, is to affirm that he renders to his creatures their due, and governs them by laws adapted to their natures and relations; that he is full of benevolence, and takes pleasure in communicating happiness to the proper objects of his goodness; that he deals sincerely with them, and never amuses them with fallacious hopes, nor terrifies them with imaginary fears." "As a holy being, God loves, and can but love every thing which is conformable to his law, and hates every thing which is contrary to it. 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' (1 John i. 5.) His nature is as pure as the sunlight when it first emanates from its source. Sin is more offensive to him than the most disgusting taste

is to our palate, or the most loathsome object to our eye. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and he can not look upon iniquity." *

Having thus considered the nature of this Divine perfection, let us now turn to notice some of the methods in which it is displayed ; and,

1. *It is manifested in the holy nature originally possessed by all the angels, and also by man, as coming from the hand of God.*

That God created the angels, and that they were all holy when they first came into being, are propositions which few will venture to deny. That *man* also was created by him, and that he too, was at first holy, without any taint of sin, will also be, by most readers, cheerfully admitted. The Scripture declaration, "God made man upright," will not be questioned by the impartial reader. *Now, if angels and men were holy when God created them, then must they have had a holy creator.* An imperfect creator can not make a perfect creature ; an unholy creator can not produce a holy being. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ?" is an inquiry which Job propounded in his day, and the reason and judgment of all men reply, with him, "not one." That holiness was the original state of *both angels and men*, the Scriptures abundantly teach ; and reason says that *holy* beings can only come from the hands of a *holy God*.

We know very well that the question has often been asked in a sort of triumphant derision, "Who

* Dick's Theology.

made the devil and his angels?" We reply, God made them, but he made them *holy angels*, and by their *own voluntary* sin they made themselves *devils*. It has often been heard, too, as an expression of wonder, on the lips of those who have the temerity to reject the teachings of God in revelation, *how man*, with all his present sinfulness and depravity, could with any propriety be called the child of a holy God! If those persons who are so sorely puzzled would but admit the truth of the Mosaic record touching creation, and concede the single reasonable proposition, that from a *holy God could not come an unholy being*, and that Adam and Eve were both originally perfect—created in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and that all sin, corruption, depravity and evil have resulted from the *voluntary* apostacy of man—his willful lapse from his first estate—if this single fact, clearly revealed in Scripture, were but admitted, all cause for wonder and surprise would cease.

It is, of course, very true that even were this admitted, all opportunity for *cavil* would not be removed. Men would still continue to ask, as they have done in every age, "Why did not God create both men and angels with such natures that they *could not* sin? Why did he not render them *incapable* of sinning?" To all such inquiries we are compelled to reply, that for what he did, an all-wise, omniscient, holy and sovereign God must have had *good and sufficient reasons*, and that it is enough for us to exclaim, with reverence and love, "*Even so*,

Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight !" Of this and many other mysteries we may have a better knowledge when we come to view them in the brighter light of an eternal day. But,

2. *God's holiness is manifested in the matchless excellence of the moral law, given as a rule of life to his accountable creatures.*

When angels were created, we presume that a perfect moral law was enstamped by their Creator upon their nature. This law was violated by those who fell from their first estate, and there being no method devised for their recovery, they rest this hour, and must for ever rest, under the power of that law, as a condemning statute. Adam, too, when created, had this law engraven upon *his* soul, so that his eating the forbidden fruit was not only in contravention of the special condition of the covenant of works, but was in direct violation of the eternal principles of right and duty, woven by the finger of the Almighty into the very texture of his moral being. Man, however, was not left, like the fallen angels, to perish without hope; so God was pleased to write out, as his rule of duty, in characters which could be read and pondered, that law which was once the undimmed and unsullied expression in his soul, of the divine will. Angels had but one copy of that law—the one written upon their spiritual nature; man, by the grace of God, more fortunate, has this law set forth in revelation, especially contained in that summary known as the *decalogue* or *ten commandments*. The record of the law upon the soul of man has be-

come sullied, and blurred, and blotted, and all but illegible, by reason of the fall; still, traces of it are seen in the conscience, and wherever it shows itself indications of its old purity, and holiness, and perfection appear. It is, however, in the *written* code; especially in that comprehensive summary known as the Decalogue, that we are made to see that the "law is holy and the commandment holy."

Now, the holiness of God will appear clearly reflected in his law, when we consider both the *design* of it, and the *tendency* of it. The *design* of the law, whether written in our hearts or in the decalogue, is to *make us more like God*. It is a transcript of the divine will, and we are to conform our life to it; and the more we become like what the law requires in our lives, the more we are like God. Then the *tendency* of the law is to lead us upward to God. The apostle says it is "a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ." This is not only its design and end, but, by the grace of God, its inevitable tendency, too.

Our argument, then, is this: *a law which is pronounced by an inspired apostle to be holy, having such holy and sanctifying ends, and whose tendency is to lead the soul out of its defilement into the bosom of God, does most clearly demonstrate the HOLINESS of that Being from whom it emanated.* The argument here is the same as that drawn from the creation of man and of angels. A *holy* offspring can not come from an *unholy* parentage. A code of moral laws, *perfectly holy*, could only have been framed by a HOLY LAWGIVER. But,

3. *We see the holiness of God displayed in the moral government of the universe.**

It is an undeniable fact, confirmed by the experience of every age and generation, that men can not commit sin with impunity. There is something — call it “*nature*,” call it “*the established order of things*,” call it what you will — which is a *check* and *restraint* upon indulgence in violation of the holy law written at creation upon our souls, and reproduced in the Scriptures of Divine truth. The man who, in any age, in any country, among any people, under any circumstances, or for any cause, disregards or tramples upon, or in any way defies this holy law, *feels, in some way, and sooner or later, the consequences*. There is an uneasiness of mind, a compunction of conscience, an undefined fear of punishment, a nameless dread of impending judgment, which poisons his cup of happiness. Oftentimes he loses his health; his constitution is undermined, and he sinks, in consequence, into an untimely grave. On the other hand, that person who aims at, and who attains to some degree of conformity to the great law of holiness; who lives, by God’s help, in a measure in unison thereto, enjoys a certain peace of mind, and finds that declaration of Scripture true, that “*Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*”

And now, let no one understand us as teaching the

* For a more full consideration of this point, see Chapter XI. of this treatise. ◀

Universalist doctrine that man receives all his punishment for sin in this life ; nor the equally dangerous heresy, that man can be holy without that great and radical change of nature known as regeneration, or the new birth. But what we affirm, and all we affirm is, that there is that in the present undeniable system of things, as it exists under the moral administration of God to show, *that holiness of life is the one great standard of excellence to which he would have his intelligent creatures aspire ;* and that this order of things clearly points to a God whose very nature is *holy* as the author of it. But,

4. *The holiness of God is most gloriously exhibited in the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Although we have, here, an almost inexhaustible field, upon which we are tempted to enter, we can yet do no more than take a very hasty glance at it. Who and whence was Christ ? Now, in whatever way this question is answered, we have, in his life and character, a striking exemplification of the *holiness of God*. If, it is said, with the Socinians and Unitarians, that Christ is but a man, a creature ; that God made him as he made other human beings ; then we affirm that the *absolute holiness* and *sinlessness* which marked so undeniably the character of Jesus, must have been implanted in him by his maker. *But God can not impart what he does not himself possess.* If Jesus, then, was holy, even upon the Socinian idea, God must be holy ; for he is the source whence he derived the transcendent excellence of his nature.

But then, if on the other hand, we answer the

question, "Who was Christ?" as we believe it *should* be answered, and say that he is God; then do we see what an overwhelmingly convincing illustration his life furnishes of the holiness of Deity. The holiness of Christ can not be overlooked. This is the one great leading characteristic of his being. Every one saw it when he was here upon earth. His friends saw it, and adored him on account of it. His enemies saw it, and hated him for it. Even the man who condemned him to death saw it, and exclaimed, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; I find no fault in him." We who now read the truthful record of his life can not fail to see it. From the manger-cradle to the cross of agony and death, his purity and holiness surround him like a halo of glory; and we do not wonder at the declaration of Judas, when, flinging from his burning palm the thirty pieces of silver, he exclaimed, "I have betrayed the innocent blood."

But Christ is God. He has not, nor can he have a virtue, a grace, a perfection, which is not shared alike with the other persons of the Deity. The holiness of Christ, then, *proves and manifests, beyond question, THE HOLINESS OF THE GODHEAD.* So,

5. *This perfection of Deity is clearly exhibited in the demands of the Gospel.*

Those demands are well known. From God's first utterances, in Genesis, to the closing declarations in the Revelation, but one voice is heard: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." "Walk before me, and be thou

perfect," said God to Abraham, "for I am the Almighty God." The one great demand of Scripture, then, is for *holiness, purity, sanctification, perfection*. Now, would other than a perfect being make such a demand? Did you ever hear an earthly parent making this demand of his child? or a husband of a wife? or a king of his subjects? No, no; the absurdity would be too apparent. It could not be done. And yet we ask that those with whom we associate be as *good as ourselves*. This is all God does. "You are to dwell with me," he says, "eternally. I am to take you to myself; but you must become *like me* to be *with me*. *Purity* can only dwell with *purity*—*holiness* with *holiness*—*perfection* with *perfection*." Do you not see, then, that this demand, every where urged in Scripture, for holiness in order to heaven and intercourse with God, proves the holiness of him who demands it? If God had been an *imperfect* being, a *lower standard* of excellence would have answered. We could not ask for *perfection* in those with whom we are to associate, for we are not perfect ourselves; God, however, could but demand that in this *we* be like *him*.

6. Then, too, *the holiness of God is strikingly displayed in the sufferings and death of Christ; as man's atoning Saviour.*

It is safe to say, that if God had not been a Being of infinite holiness, some other means would have been devised through which to secure man's reconciliation to himself, than by the agonies and death of his only begotten and well-beloved Son. A being

whose holiness was not *absolute* would have looked upon the sin of man with a somewhat lenient eye, and so regarding it, would have devised some means through which an atonement could be made for it, which would not have involved a sacrifice so costly as the death of his own Son. But it was needful that Christ should die. He was the Lamb set apart for this sacrifice from before the foundation of the world. He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," to be crucified and slain. "It must needs be that Christ die," that man, the guilty rebel, might be reconciled to God. To make a sacrifice so costly, God was unquestionably prompted by his immaculate holiness. Sin must be atoned for. Holiness demanded a *full* and *perfect* sacrifice. Such was found alone in the life-blood of the only begotten Son of God.

The touching story of the life-work and dying agonies of the Lord Jesus Christ, then, is but a presentation in one form of the great truth of Scripture, that "our God is of *purser eyes* than to behold evil," and every pang of Christ upon the cross is but another way of publishing to the world the cry of the angels and archangels before the throne—"Holy, holy, holy art thou, Lord God Almighty." Every look we take at Calvary and its struggling burden is but a new view of the holiness of Him with whom we have to do; and every time we catch the sound of that terrible cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" we have a renewed attestation that absolute purity stands by with her balances,

crying, "Without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord." Calvary, with its quaking brow, its solemn pageant, and its undying lessons, speaks a language touching the holiness of God which can not be ignored.

And now, in concluding this chapter, several thoughts of great solemnity force themselves upon us. And,

1. Is it true that this great God of whom we have spoken is not only infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, but is he possessed also of absolute holiness? Do we, then, stand every day, every hour, every moment, in the presence of One who is pure — who can not look upon the least sin but with the utmost loathing and disgust? What a guard, then, should we place upon our life! How should we watch every thought, purpose, word, and act! How careful should we be lest we bring down upon ourselves, by carelessness, by negligence, or by positive transgressions, his swift and terrific judgments! Let every reader remember that this God is not only holy, and therefore possessed of an intense abhorrence of all sin, but that he is also *almighty*, and fully able to punish for every violation of his law. Solemn thought! Let all beware! Then,

2. Let it not be forgotten that the scheme of redemption through Christ *is just what sinners need*, who stand continually in the presence of a holy God. That eye, so keen to discern the slightest stains of sin — to detect the faintest traces of corruption in the soul, can never find holiness enough and purity

enough in vile, sinful man, to pronounce him entitled thereby to heaven. But in the scheme of Redemption, devised in eternity and revealed in Scripture, *God looks upon us in Christ — he sees us in the face of his Anointed.* Just as no man dared to enter the most holy place, under the Old Testament dispensation, but the High Priest, and he only when purified and cleansed, and clothed in his beautiful and costly priestly garments, so we can come to God and hope for pardon only in Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of our salvation. Looking upon *him*, God sees “no iniquity in Jacob, and no perverseness in Israel.” Oh, what a blessedness to be enabled to hide ourselves in Christ!

3. Then, lastly, while the holiness of God forbids our coming rashly, and in our own name, into his presence, it yet encourages us to come in the way of his own appointment. Having promised to save us in Christ, God is too holy not to fulfill his promise. His holiness is a pledge and guarantee of his faithfulness. His rectitude is such that he will never disappoint those who come to him pleading his own promise to save the soul through the peace-speaking blood of the Lamb. Test this rectitude, dear reader; prove this fidelity of God to his promise, and you will be saved:

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE
GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER
BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE
EVERLASTING LIFE.”

CHAPTER XXII.

“The thunders of his hand
Keep the wide world in awe.
His wrath and JUSTICE stand
To guard his holy law;
And where his love resolves to bless,
His truth confirms and seals the grace.”

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.”—PSALM
lxxxix. 14.

ATTENTION is invited, in this chapter, to one of the Divine perfections, the contemplation of which *must* ever awaken the liveliest interest in every thoughtful mind. No person can lay claim to any degree of religious sensibility, who has not reflected, with the profoundest emotions, upon the

JUSTICE OF GOD.

Whatever may be the interest felt in his other attributes, and with whatever emotions and feelings they may be contemplated, here is one which can not it would seem, be the subject of reflection, without producing sentiments of the deepest awe and reverence. Let the prayer of the reader, as he ponders the great theme of God's justice, ascend for Divine

guidance, that impressions of such a character be made upon him, that God's glory may be promoted in the sanctification and salvation of his soul.

In entering upon this discussion, attention is invited,

1. To the question, *What is the JUSTICE of God?*

In answering this question, it may be remarked that God's justice is *that disposition which renders him infinitely righteous and equitable in himself, and which secures, always and under all circumstances, the exercise of the most exact and unbending equity and righteousness in all his dealings with, and treatment of, his creatures.*

If this definition be correct, we see that God is *just or righteous in himself*; that this is an *essential* property of his nature; that, were he not *just*, had he not this perfection, he would not be God. Like infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness, knowledge, wisdom, power, and holiness, this attribute of justice belongs to God, as a necessary element in his character. No man can form a scriptural and truthful conception of Jehovah without taking into the account this property of his being. With the same reason, might one hope to form a true conception of *water*, and leave out of his mind the idea that it is a *liquid*; or of *gold*, and not remember that it has *weight*. As well form a conception of a human being, and not admit the idea of his intelligence; or of an angel, without a recognition of his spirituality. And yet, it is a well known fact, that there are not wanting those whose ideas of God lack this essential element.

They banish, or at least strive to banish, the thought of his justice. His goodness, mercy, truth, faithfulness, and love, they are ever ready to extol. They are loud in their praises of his compassion, and sympathy, and benevolence. They fully accord to him these, as essential qualities of his nature; but the moment you speak of his justice, they shrink back in dismay.

That the Scriptures give no countenance to this partial, and hence defective and erroneous, conception of the Divine character, can be demonstrated by the most superficial acquaintance with its pages. Every where, the *justice* or *righteousness* of God — for these two words designate the same quality of the Divine nature — is represented as equally essential to God's being as any other of his perfections. Thus we read, "just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints;" and "true and righteous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty." Here, justice and truth — two of God's perfections — are named in immediate connection. *Truth*, it will be admitted by all, is an *essential* attribute of Deity; by what logic, then, will the other perfection named in the *same* connection, and placed, evidently by inspiration, upon the *same* basis, be cast out as something not necessarily of the Divine nature? The same conjunction of attributes is seen in the frequent declarations of the Psalms, such as, "The Lord is true and righteous altogether." "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." The reader will see at a

glance that there is no distinction whatever made in the mention of these qualities. The mercy, the holiness, the graciousness of Jehovah *are essential attributes of his character*. Without these, he would not be God. And yet, his righteousness or justice is named in the same manner precisely that these other qualities are. Who, then, will say that *justice* is not as truly essential to the perfection of the Divine nature as *mercy* or *love*?

We have, however, two other very remarkable passages found in the New Testament Scriptures, which, as it would appear, ought to be conclusive upon this point. One is the declaration of the beloved John, in which he says that "if we confess our sins, God is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) No one will refuse to accept the teaching of this text touching the "faithfulness" of God. *This first* named attribute will not be denied him; all will cheerfully concede it as a perfection rightly ascribed to him in his word. How bold that temerity, then, and how naked that audacity, which would admit the "*faithfulness*," and deny the "*justice*," when they have been coupled in the same expression. We may well say of this, as has been said of the holy relationship of marriage, What God hath joined, let not man put asunder.

The other passage is found in that remarkable prayer of Christ, as recorded in the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, in which the Saviour makes use of the language, "O *righteous* Father," in his appeal to God

as a God of love. Here, *Christ* ascribes to him the attribute of righteousness or justice, while in the same breath he speaks of the *love* which the Father had toward him before the foundation of the world. Surely, it will be difficult — nay, impossible — for those who hold to God's essential faithfulness and love, and yet deny his essential justice, to account for the remarkable conjunction of these attributes in the same breath. But,

2. We have stated, not only that *God's justice* is an attribute *essential to his being*, but also that its possession *secures always, and under all circumstances, absolute equity in his dealings with, and treatment of his creatures.*

As God is *holy* he can not have an *unholy* thought, purpose, or desire; nor can he perform an *unholy* action. So, as he is just, all his thoughts, purposes, desires, and actions, must be most equitable and right. As being *infinitely wise*, all that he does *demonstrates* his wisdom; and as being *infinitely powerful*, all that he does *demonstrates* his *might*; so being *infinitely just*, all that he may do, reveals his *justice* and *equity*. He can no more do an *unjust* thing, than he can perform an *unwise* thing; he can no more violate a principle of *equity*, than he can a principle of *mercy*. Indeed, an unjust act, on the part of God, would be *the sacrifice of every moral attribute of his nature*. Such an act could neither be wise, nor faithful, nor loving, nor merciful, nor good. An *unjust* act would be a simple exercise of unre-

strained power, having no regard to holiness. Of this, of course, God could not be guilty.

With the above statements, men will usually concur so long as you confine your consideration of this attribute to its more *general* manifestations. If you speak in a general way of God's justice and equity, little objection will be made. But when you undertake to bring the subject home to the *every day life* of man; when you speak of God's absolute and unbending equity in its *relations to man's condition before his Maker*, and to his *conduct*, tried by the standard of a perfect law; then you witness the exhibition of the most extraordinary unwillingness to concede any thing. Why is this? Why should men be any more unwilling to admit that God is just, and that he *must* display his equity in treating with them, than to admit that he is merciful, compassionate, and kind? As a general thing, there is no difficulty in obtaining the assent of mankind to the proposition that God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Why, then, should this other perfection be altogether denied to him, or its possession only partially and grudgingly conceded the moment it is shown to have a relation to human conduct? Alas! we need not ask these questions. *If man were not a sinner*, he would not shrink as he does at this point. He does not fear to contemplate the fact that God's *love* has a relation to him most intimate and most constant; nor that Jehovah, *as a God of mercy and compassion*, has to do with him every moment of his existence. He does not shrink

from contact with God in *these* aspects of his character. But *justice punishes sin*. The guilty can not stand before a God of absolute equity. The unrighteous and corrupt can not endure the scrutiny of a being who can not look upon sin without the severest condemnation. *This* is why the effort has been so persistently made *to deny* to God this attribute so essential to his perfection.

3. This attribute of the Almighty, then, in its application to intelligent and accountable beings, may be contemplated in a twofold aspect:

1. *As exercising a righteous control over the whole human family in their relations to each other*. It extends to nations, in their intercourse with sister nations, to cities and communities, in their conduct towards one another, and in their treatment of the persons who compose them; to families—to fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, in their deportment toward each other; and to *all* individuals of the human family in all ages, in all the matters which relate to their conduct towards their fellow-men. The justice of God, like his omniscience, *is every where*. All the acts of the human family, in their intercourse with each other—as superiors, inferiors, or equals, as rulers, and ruled, as high and low, rich and poor, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants—are within the purview of this wondrous perfection. God's justice prompts him to the exercise of the strictest discipline among men, in accordance with their conduct towards each other. No

king is so powerful, no emperor so exalted, no ruler so mighty, but that his every act, good or bad, is noted; and, in strict equity, receives the award due to merit or demerit. The conduct of the *subjects*, also — of the *ruled* as well as the *rulers*, of the people as well as the President or the prince — is the subject of God's righteous supervision. No man can adjudge that he is so *low*, so *obscure*, so *humble*, so insignificant, that infinite justice will not reach him. As the atmosphere surrounds and covers and touches every material thing on earth, so God's equity reaches to every soul, and has cognizance of the moral bearings of every act between man and man. But —

2. *This infinite justice is to be contemplated, as viewing every act of man in its relations to Deity.* The theater of its discipline is not only in the direction of our conduct toward our fellow-men, but also includes our acts as they have reference to our Maker. Man is considered by it, as having not only an earth-life, with all its multiplied and varied relations and duties, but as having also a spiritual and eternal life; and justice demands that he should live with a wise reference to *his God*, as well as with regard to *his fellow-men*. The revealed law of God, of which Divine justice is the custodian and guardian, has its two-fold bearings. It contains both our duty to God, and our duty to man; and for a failure to comply with either, or for a direct violation of either, justice will hold every human being accountable.

Now, while most men in a Christian land readily recognize the fact that, *in respect to man's relations to his fellow-man*, we have a theater in which the strictest justice should be displayed — while they would regard it as most disastrous, if, under a moral government, thieves and robbers, and extortioners and murderers should go unpunished — still they are oftentimes unwilling to admit that they themselves should be held by justice to a strict *accountability in their relations to God*. Justice, they admit to be a good thing; nay, a necessary thing, where *man* is concerned with *man* — where the *creature* has to do with the *creature*; but they seem to think, and oftentimes do not hesitate to say, that for God to hold them responsible for any neglect or violation of their duties to him, would be *unjust and tyrannical*. If, by a series of undeniable providences, the guilt of the murderer is at length detected, and the culprit, reeking with the blood of his victim, is brought to the gallows, all men of right feelings *approve* the result, and *applaud* that exhibition of righteous retribution which has not allowed the guilty to escape; but if a series of undeniable providences befall an individual or a family, how hard is it to induce the world to believe that Divine *justice* is applying the scourge for some neglect of duty to God; some failure to honor him “in whom we live, and move, and have our being.” And yet it can not be denied that our obligations are two-fold, and relate *both to God and man*; that if it is *right*, and *proper*, and *necessary*, as all admit, for infinite justice

to recognize and punish offences of the *one kind*, then is it equally *right*, and *proper*, and *necessary*, that offences of the other kind should be recognized and punished. Nay, more; if we are bound, both to our fellow-men and to God, by duty, then a violation of the obligation under which we rest to God is deserving of an *immeasurably greater punishment*, as God is *infinitely greater than man*. Reason herself declares that the more high and holy, the more pure, and good, and beneficent, the being whose rights and prerogatives we invade, whose commands we trample upon, and whose honor we despise—the *more guilty* we are, and the *more* deserving of punishment. Once admit — what can not be successfully denied — that we owe love, reverence, obedience, and worship, to God; that it is our bounden duty to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—then a violation, or neglect, or failure here, becomes an offense so grave *that infinite justice can not overlook it*. The man who is guilty here, and remains in guilt, *must* be punished.

4. While, then, it is clear, as we conceive, that justice has the entire review of man's relations, both in their higher and lower conditions; both in respect to the duties to God and to man, yet we readily admit *that there are questions which continually arise, touching this subject, which are not so easily answered*. For instance, it has been asked,

1. *How can God be possessed of this attribute, and yet allow the wicked to triumph over the righteous; to go on, year after year, in the enjoyment of their*

wealth and honors, while the child of God is trampled in the dust and made to bear the heaviest burdens? This thought once troubled David. He could, at first, see neither *goodness* nor *equity* in this. But he was permitted, at length, to behold the *miserable end* of the ungodly. Going into the sanctuary, the difficulty was removed. He saw that all their wealth, and honors, and dignities, *did not save them*, while the *trials* and *afflictions* of the *godly*, were the *means of securing their eternal felicity*. The truth is, that in many respects, the justice of God can not be clearly seen until the *end of all things* is reached. We must wait until we stand at the bar of God, and mark the awards of the *last day*, before we can pronounce upon these great questions. This is not the *only* class of mysteries too dark to be fully read by the light of time. Then,

2. *It is again often asked, how can God be infinitely just, and yet punish man for not keeping his law, when it is well known that he has not the ability, of himself, to keep it perfectly?*

Perhaps it will absolve God from the charge of injustice here, if it is remembered, that as man came from the hand of his Maker, he *had power to keep the law*; that *God* did not take this power from him, but that *man himself* madly cast it away. Shall a perfect God, then, abate one iota of his demands? If one owes his friend a thousand dollars, and, instead of paying the debt, *gamble away the money*, is the friend *debarred* forever from *asking payment*? Must God *abate* his demands because, by our own act, we

have lost ability to keep his law? Must he say, "you can no longer obey; therefore, I can in justice no longer hold you responsible?" No; this would not be true. Justice *must* yet demand of the creature *perfect* obedience, let the consequences to man be what they may.

3. The great difficulty, however, in this connection, is that which some experience *in admitting that God can be just, and yet punish man eternally for his sins*. The trouble with these, is not that there should be *punishment*, but that it should *endure for ever*. We have not the space here, nor is this the place to enter upon a minute investigation of this difficulty. It is, however, to be considered, that if future punishment is admitted at all, the *eternity of it must be conceded*. It can not be shown, either by sound logic, or by the word of God, that there is, or ever will be, a single *reforming agent*, or *instrumentality, in hell*. If, then, the soul ever passes *into torment*, it can *never* escape. Whatever difficulty, then, may be encountered here, this *fact* must for ever stare us in the face: *The Holy Ghost never convinces nor converts; the blood of Jesus never cleanses from sin—in hell!*

But further. This punishment must be *eternal*, inasmuch as the *guilt* for which it is inflicted is *infinite*. The *finite* punishment of a finite creature will never atone for an *infinite* crime. That the *guilt* of the sinner is *infinite*, is due to the fact already stated, that he violates the laws of an *infinitely holy God*. Justice, therefore, can admit of nothing less,

in the way of punishment, than an *infinity*, and an *infinite* punishment requires an *eternity* for its infliction. And now, if to these considerations any thing additional is required, let it be found in the *plain*, *positive*, and *unequivocal* language of Scripture: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched," and where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."

Let this suffice. Behold the terrible sentence of infinite justice upon those who reject the offers of mercy made in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Two thoughts claim our attention in conclusion :

1. It is a most solemn consideration that every soul that sins, is resting under the scrutiny of this inflexible justice. Whether we wish it or not; whether agreeable or disagreeable, yet thus it is. This wonderful attribute has but one office. It looks upon a holy law and then upon the sinner's life, and marking the vast, the infinite discrepancy between them, it *demand*s satisfaction. In vain does the sinner attempt this. He has no adequate satisfaction to give. He *can not* atone for himself. He looks in vain upon the right hand and the left ; there is no human eye to pity, no human arm to save. Must justice, then, demand the eternal punishment due to sin ? Must eternal death be inflicted upon every soul ? O no !

2. Behold, one appears as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. He lifts his voice, and cries, in tones of authority, "Deliver,

deliver from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom." He throws his hands aloft, and lo ! they bear the print of the nails. He casts aside a bloody vestment, and behold, in a gaping wound in his side, is revealed a fountain of atoning blood. He points to his brow, and from a score of orifices, trickle the pure currents which alone can cleanse the soul from guilt. "Look upon me," he cries, "and live. I have met the demands of this inexorable justice in your room and stead. I have received that punishment which was due to you. Come and believe in me ; rely upon my mercy ; trust my grace ; seek the cleansing efficacy of my blood, and you are safe. Justice can ask no more than what I have rendered. Look unto me, then, and be ye saved." Who, O who can resist that cry ? Who can turn a deaf ear to such an entreaty ? Reader, can you ?

"See in the Saviour's dying blood
Life, health, and bliss, abundant flow ;
'Tis only this dear sacred flood
Can ease thy pain, and heal thy woe."

CHAPTER XXIII.

“O all-sufficient! all beneficent!
Thou God of GOODNESS and of glory hear!
Thou who resigned humility, upholdest
E'en as the florist props the drooping rose,
But quellest tyrannic pride with peerless power,
E'en as the tempest rives the stubborn oak;
Bless all mankind, and bring them, in the end,
To heaven, to immortality, and Thee.”—C. SMART.

“O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness.”—PSALM cvii. 8.

STRANGE as it may appear, the more self-evident a proposition is, the more difficult we find it to *reason* upon it. Little can be said upon the problem that *two and two make four*, simply because the matter is too plain to admit of doubt or discussion. No argument is demanded to prove that the sun shines by day; that the tides rise and fall; that the earth revolves upon its axis; and that all men must die. These are questions which admit of no dispute. To deny them would be accounted an evidence of insanity; to undertake to prove them, would be a work of supererogation.

Thus it is, precisely, with the Divine attribute of which we treat in this chapter.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

is so generally admitted, that to *assert it*, is very much like saying that the sun shines, that the rivers flow, and that the seasons change; and to *deny* this attribute to God, would be to convict one's self of a stupidity almost brutal. It is not our purpose, therefore, to undertake to *prove that God is good*. We wish to *define* this perfection; to designate some of the ways in which it is displayed among men, and then defend it against some of the misapprehensions which exist concerning it. And,

1. *How may we define the GOODNESS of God?* We answer, that this is that perfection of the Divine nature *which renders God infinitely merciful, benevolent, loving, and gracious, in himself, and in all his manifestations to his creatures*. But under this general term, GOODNESS, may be included all that is expressed by *grace, mercy, kindness, pity, compassion, forbearance, patience, long-suffering, and love*. It is a term, then, as will be readily perceived, which is very comprehensive. No other attribute of Deity is set forth under so many different appellations in the Word of God; none is more frequently mentioned as worthy the admiration of men and of angels. When it is affirmed that "the mercy of God is over all his works," that "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," that he is "long-suffering and slow to anger," that he is "gracious," that he is "full of compassion," that the remission of sin is secured through his "forbear-

ance," and that "God is love," we understand by all these varied expressions and terms, that this *one* glorious perfection is represented, and that these are only so many *phases* — if we may so speak — of the one attribute of *goodness*. It may not be possible to point out the special shades of meaning which distinguish all these various terms; and yet, that each has its peculiar signification, we may readily infer. The goodness of God displays itself in *kindness* and *forbearance*, even to the sinful and undeserving. His mercy and grace are, in general, the displays of goodness to those who, seeing their sins, are disposed to turn from them unto God. His pity and compassion are the displays of goodness to the weak and suffering, while "love" has respect to the perishing, and may be regarded as Divine goodness enlisted in the great work of redeeming souls from hell. Thus it is used in the oft-quoted passage, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A careful consideration of the import of the various terms by which the Divine goodness displays itself, will aid us in arriving at a clear understanding of the operations of this precious attribute. To say that God is good, is at the same time, and in one word, to assert his mercy; his grace; his pity; his compassion; his kindness; his forbearance; his patience; his long-suffering; and his love. Now, each of these terms designates a property of Deity necessary to his perfection; for if God were not long-

suffering, forbearing, pitiful, loving, and kind, there certainly would be wanting that in his character which our reason assures us should be possessed by the Moral Governor of the universe. Even the heathen arrived at such an idea of the Supreme Being, that while degrading him in many other particulars, they yet were led to speak of him as the "Best," as well as "the Greatest of beings." And all this God is *in himself*. All this he would have been had neither men nor angels been created; all this belongs as truly and as necessarily to the Divine nature and essence, as his eternity, infinity, or unchangeableness. Having thus *defined* this perfection, we are now prepared to consider,

II. Some of the ways in which it is displayed. And here a field so *wide*, so *boundless*, indeed, opens up before us, that we hardly dare venture upon it. If we consider the very first movement of the Divine mind of which we have any knowledge, namely, the purpose formed in eternity to redeem a ruined world by atoning mercy in Jesus Christ, we discover that *Divine goodness* in that peculiar manifestation of it known as *love*, was *then*, and thus *early*, and thus *signally*, displayed. If we consider the *first* Divine *act*, of which we know any thing, namely, the creation of the angels, we are at no loss to detect a most striking exhibition of this attribute. These glorious beings were formed with perfectly holy natures, and were hence designed by the Divine goodness to be, in and of themselves, perfectly happy; and then being created as the instruments

of happiness to others, the love, and mercy, and kindness of their Creator, was still further exhibited, for, says the Apostle, "Are they not all ministering spirits' sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" Tracing the presence of *design* in creation, and marking how every thing is characterized by a wonderful adaptation to some useful purpose; noticing, as we must, that every thing has a place to fill, and an end to subserve, and that this end is some *beneficent* one, and this place some good and useful one, we can come to no other conclusion, than that the Author of Creation is a being of infinite goodness. All that we can discover objects to be in themselves, and all that we find them to be in the design or end which they subserve, only tends more and more to develop the goodness of their Creator. The ten thousand objects upon every hand, which are manifestly designed to impart happiness both to animals and man; the food and drink which when in health we always receive with pleasure, the varied sights which please the eye, and the sounds which delight the ear, the rest of sleep, and the sweets of society and companionship—all this being planned, devised, and ordained by God himself, with the manifest purpose of securing the comfort and enhancing the bliss of his creatures—clearly demonstrates his goodness. Says Dr. Paley, when speaking upon this subject, "If God had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of

gratification and enjoyment; or by placing us amidst objects so ill suited to our perceptions as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw, loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every smell, a stench; and every sound, a discord." This, however, he has not done; but the reverse. He has so adjusted our organs and faculties to the objects found around us in the material world, and has so adapted them, in turn, to our state as physical and spiritual beings, that *pleasure*, and not *pain*, *happiness*, and not *misery*, *joy*, and not *anguish*, is the result. In looking forth upon all things, in the light of the thought here presented, we have not the least hesitation in affirming that we have here such a signal display of the Divine goodness, that none but he who is resolved not to see, can fail to be convinced.

And then, is it necessary that we should direct attention to the exhibitions of this perfection, as found in the wondrous provision made for the *sustenance* of all creatures? A being without goodness, as a necessary quality of his nature, would be indifferent touching the support of the lower orders of existence. But behold! what care is every where displayed throughout the whole universe in providing food and covering for man and beast! Look at the myriads of existences, large and small, in the animal creation. The air, the waters, and the earth are filled with them; and yet, as respects them all,

we can say to God, as did the Psalmist, "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." From the invisible animalcule revealed to us as a veritable existence only by the most powerful microscopes, up through all the grades of animal being to the whale of the ocean, and to the rhinoceros and elephant of the land, we behold the most ample and careful provision made for their sustenance by Him who at the first spake them into being. What a display of infinite goodness, to provide with such an amplitude of bounty for all these !

The views, however, thus far presented are among the lowest we can take of this subject, and are the least worthy of our consideration. We will not secure our highest and best conceptions of this attribute of our Heavenly Father by confining our observation to the *animal* creation, or to *man* in his *earthly* and *physical* relations. In the *intellectual* and *moral* natures bestowed upon man ; in the *future* and *eternal* existence opened up before him ; in the pleasure which he can now experience as a *spiritual* being ; in the contemplation of the character of his Creator ; in the anticipation of a blissful immortality beyond the grave ; and, above all, in the enjoyment of the unspeakable blessedness of a full, free, and unmerited pardon of all sin, through the mercy of God in Christ — HERE and in this direction do we find the *highest* tokens of our merciful Father's *infinite* goodness.

It can not be denied, that had God chosen, he might have left man, after the fall, in his estate of sin and misery. He was under no obligation to redeem him. Had he seen fit to leave him just as the apostacy left him, not a soul could have complained. In that case Adam would have been the progenitor of a race resting under a just and righteous sentence of eternal death, and as each human being came into existence, another soul would be added to that mournful procession, marching across the ages to a hopeless, rayless perdition. But the goodness of God had something in store for man brighter and better than this. Through the infinite compassion of a being matchless in goodness, a ray of hope beamed out and cast its light upon the dark waves of moral and spiritual desolation and death. He spake peace to the perishing. He announced the coming Saviour. He displayed his infinite goodness by giving Christ to the cross. He brought for man life and immortality to light. He sent the Holy Ghost to convince of sin, to seal salvation to hard and stony hearts, to lead to Jesus, to cleanse and sanctify the soul, and to equip it with all its needed spiritual garniture for the skies. Here and in this direction do we see the most sublime—the culminating exhibition of Infinite Goodness. To man, as an *immortal* being, as endowed with *undying* capacities and powers as charged with eternal interest, as having relations extending through a limitless future, has there been an exhibition of mercy, grace and love, rich

and full, and glorious beyond expression. We can truly exclaim —

“Thy GOODNESS, Lord, our souls confess—
Thy GOODNESS we adore;
A SPRING whose blessings never fail,
A SEA without a shore:
But chiefly thy compassion, Lord
Is in the GOSPEL seen;
There, like a SUN, thy mercy shines
Without a cloud between.”

Undeniable, however, as the goodness of God is, and innumerable as are the tokens of it on every hand, there are yet those who are found to question it. We are thus brought to consider the *third* point proposed, to wit:

III. *The objections urged against the Divine Goodness.* And,

1. It is often said, “How can God be possessed of infinite goodness, *and yet permit the existence of so many natural evils?*” Sickness, disease and death, famine and pestilence, it is urged, continually prey upon the human family. Cold and heat, summer’s drouth and winter’s snows, the scorching rays of the sun, and the biting frosts, hold alternate sway. Behold, too, it is said, what desolation is wrought by the storm, the whirlwind, the tornado, the lightning and the earthquake? See the vessel out upon the ocean waves, freighted with precious souls, sinking before the gale, and bearing down with it, into one yawning grave, the young and the old, the righteous and the wicked, the sick and the well. “How,” it is asked, “can all that we behold of nat-

ural evil be reconciled with the idea of God's infinite goodness?"

There will not be a particle of difficulty in this matter if we remember that *man is a sinner*, that his attitude before God in this life is that of a being requiring *discipline* and *chastisement*, and that all the natural evils we witness in the universe are but so many *rods* by which God is in mercy *chastising* the world *for its good*. Indeed, these things which are called natural evils, so far from being impeachments of God's goodness, are among the most signal proofs and attestations of it. If you were to see a father chastising his son for some palpable offence, would you infer that he was cruel or unkind? Certainly not. Your inference would be the reverse. You would say that the parent desired the good of his boy; that he was by these stripes seeking to save him. So if you should see the lawful authorities of the land active and vigilant in bringing culprits to justice — seeking faithfully to punish the guilty violators of the law, would you say, would any right-minded man say, that this was an *impeachment* of the goodness of the authorities? Is not the inference just the reverse? Is not that called a good government which *punishes* those who trample upon its laws?

Thus you perceive that this objection has no force. Natural evils are but the *stripes* with which God visits, for their *own good* and the *good of society*, the culprits under his moral government.

It has, however, been asked,

2. *Why has God permitted sin?* Why, being infinite in his power, has he allowed such a thing in his universe as *moral* evil, when it opens up the way for the existence of natural evil? In answer to this we can only say, that the mere existence of moral evil is no impeachment of the goodness and mercy of God. Before we can assert that it is, we must show that God is the *author* of sin, which we can not do, and which the Bible distinctly denies. That God chose, in the exercise of his sovereignty, to create man a free moral agent, is most true; and that man, in the exercise of his freedom, chose to sin, and to bring moral evil into the world, is also true. Why man was created free we know not, just as we know not why God chose to create man at all; but having created him holy and pure, and having shown us in Scripture that upon man rests the responsibility of sinning, we are bound to exculpate God from all imputations. His goodness, like every other attribute of his glorious nature, stands unimpeached. We have no more right to affirm that the goodness of God was impeached when moral evil was introduced into the world by man, than to say that his *justice* was impeached when Christ, a holy being, *died* for the unholy, or that his *omnipotence* was impeached in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day. Some might ask, "How can God be just, when he allowed so unjust a thing as the death of Christ, his own Son?" or "How can he be *almighty*, and permit the massacre of thousands of his true and humble followers, by his and their bitter foes?" The truth is,

God is just, and omnipotent, and good, notwithstanding all these seeming difficulties; and when we come to look back upon the mysteries of the present dispensation from the heights of everlasting glory, we will see it, if not before.

Two thoughts, in conclusion, press themselves upon us in the light of this discussion:

1. Are we living as those should live who are the recipients of the constant tokens of Infinite Goodness? Do we remember as we should the source whence has flowed all our mercies, temporal and spiritual? Do we realize that it is this God of infinite goodness who has crowned our life "with loving kindness and tender mercies?" How easy is it to forget the author of all the blessings daily and hourly flowing in upon our pathway, and to come at length to think of them as things to which we are *somehow* entitled! This, however, should never be. The heathen have their idols continually before them. They are placed in every prominent position in their houses. They rear them at the corners of the streets. They hang them up in their bed-chambers. They place them before them upon their tables and their mantels. They bear them with them when upon their journeys. These poor, darkened idolaters would not forget their gods of wood, of clay, of silver and of gold, for in their infatuation they ascribe to these the blessings of which they are the daily recipients. Will the enlightened in Christian lands be less mindful of the true God, the real source of all good, than these idolaters are of the false? Will we, who know

the truth, allow ourselves to be outdone by these blinded, infatuated heathen? God forbid! Let us daily and hourly remember that our God is the source of every good and perfect gift, and seek at all times to realize that "in him we live, and move, and have our being." Then,

2. It should never be forgotten, that the goodness of God is a *continual demand upon us for our love and service*. A *bare* recognition is something; a *grateful, affectionate* recognition, is still more worthy the recipients of the Divine goodness; but he only who is *led*, by a sense of the Divine mercy, to an *acceptance* of the offer of life and salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, makes a *true use* of the riches of God's matchless love. It is safe to say, that God never bestows blessings upon his creatures, viewed merely as dwellers upon the earth. He has ever in view their eternal destiny. All his gifts, even temporal and physical, are designed to bring them to Christ. This is unquestionably the purport of Paul's inquiry of the Romans: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."

And, O reader! *if the goodness of God should not lead thee to repentance*, what a fearful doom will be thine? What madness to live the daily, hourly recipient of untold mercies; to have ten thousand enjoyments showered upon you; to live in a land of Bibles; in a land of Gospel light; to have, of God's goodness, offered to you the full forgiveness of all

your sins, and yet to live on, cold, impassive, sinful, trampling upon God's goodness, despising his mercies, contemning his love ! How justly worthy such conduct, the severest judgments of the Almighty ! Be your own judge, and say what, after all this, should be your doom. Turn, then, to the Lord, and turn now, for

“BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME ; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

“But what is TRUTH? ’Twas Pilate’s question put
To TRUTH itself, that deigned him no reply.
And wherefore? Will not God impart his light
To them that ask it? Freely; ’tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature, to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.”—COWPER.

“A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.”—DEUT.
xxxii. 4.

WE enter, in this chapter, upon the contemplation of the last of the Divine attributes. We have considered, in the preceding pages, God’s infinity, eternity, unchangeableness, knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and goodness; and now there remains but his

TRUTH

to complete the glorious galaxy of Divine perfections.

In treating of this attribute we shall pursue much the same course we have already adopted in considering the other perfections of Deity. We shall *define, in the first place, its nature, and then consider*

the proof that it is indeed one of the divine attributes, closing with a notice of some of the objections urged against our view of the subject.

I. What, then, are we to understand by *Truth*, as an attribute of the Divine nature? We answer that *Truth is that essential perfection of the Divine Being which renders him for ever and unchangeably averse to all that is false and deceptive, leading him always to speak the truth, to verify whatever he has spoken, and to require of his accountable creatures the truth in all their utterances and actions.*

This definition, as will be seen, embraces both the *veracity* and the *faithfulness* of God. God is true in the sense of being *veracious*. Whatever he affirms may be relied upon as most worthy of all credit. He can not lie. As well can he cease to be omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, just, holy, or good, as cease to be true. Veracity is an element so necessary in a Divine Being that we can not conceive of him as wanting it. Should this attribute of God be in *one instance* impeached, it would undermine all confidence and trust, and fill the universe with confusion and anarchy. So fully convinced were the sacred writers of this, that there is probably no perfection of the divine nature which is regarded with more reverence than God's truth, or vindicated with more earnestness and zeal. The intelligent reader will readily recall that outburst of holy warmth by an inspired apostle, "*Let God be true, but every man a liar.*" As though he had said, "*Let the whole world be convicted of falsehood, of deception, of a want of vera-*

city, but *let God* be true. Shake not by word or thought the *reliance* of man in this divine attribute."

Not only, however, do we understand by the *Truth of God* his *veracity*, there is also included in this his *faithfulness*. Whatever he *utters*, not only, is true and worthy of credit, and whatever he *does* is not only in strict accordance with absolute *truth*, but he never forgets a promise to fulfill it — he never utters a threatening which he will not make good. If, in the language of Scripture, "the truth of the Lord endureth for ever," "his *faithfulness* is unto all generations."

This, then, is what we understand by the Truth of God. It includes both his *veracity* and his *faithfulness*. He can utter nothing but that which is worthy of absolute reliance, and he can but remember his words to verify them in the fulfillment of all that he has promised, and in all that he has threatened; and as a necessary corollary from this, he *must* of necessity *require* truth and fidelity in his moral and accountable creatures.

II. And now, *how do we prove that this is indeed an attribute of the Divine nature? How do we know that God is true?*

To this we answer:

1. *That reason herself testifies to the truth of God, inasmuch as a want of this attribute implies the presence of falsehood, duplicity and deception, and the presence of these implies a character so vile and base that all right-minded persons must shrink from the ascription of such a character to God.*

If it were possible to think of God as merely *wanting* in truth—if we could contemplate him as presenting in this respect merely a negative character—*empty* simply of veracity and faithfulness, there would, perhaps, in this view be less to shock the feelings and outrage the enlightened judgment; but when it is remembered that there *can be no such negation in God*, if he has not absolute truth to characterize him, then has he positive falsehood, duplicity and faithlessness. If he is not infinitely veracious and infinitely faithful, then is he filled with the opposite of these glorious qualities. When we consider this we start back with horror, and cry, “Surely *such* a being can not be the God of the universe!”

It is one of the most convincing proofs of the awful depths of degradation and moral darkness into which the human mind can sink, that even in Greece and Rome, in the palmy days of their civilization, men could contemplate with complacency the writings of poets and philosophers, ascribing to their false deities the grossest duplicity and deceit. It was only because the minds of those peoples were sunken almost to the level of the brutes around them, that they did not see how *utterly* abhorrent to all just ideas of Deity were such conceptions. Enlightened reason, however, assures us that such a being can not be God. A *want of truth* is a defect so fatal—so radical—striking so directly at the foundations of all that is just and good and elevating—all that is lovely and pure, and desirable—that even *nature* herself exclaims against it. We want our God to be

one whom we can *admire, love, respect* and *imitate*; we wish to *trust, rely upon*, and *adore* him. We wish to be able to point our children to him, and stimulate them to be as he is. These are among the fundamental demands of an enlightened judgment. There is a cry heard in every human heart—a voice in every human soul for such a God as this; and yet this demand must remain for ever unanswered—this cry for ever ascend in vain, if God is not a God of *Truth*; for, wanting this perfection, all else that might be true of him would fail to inspire the least respect, love, admiration or reverence. No soul can rest with confidence upon any being convicted, or even justly *suspected* of duplicity. But,

2. Reason assures us that our God must be a God of Truth, *inasmuch as an intelligent being will never either violate veracity or faithfulness without a motive, and no motive could induce God to vary in the slightest degree from the truth.*

It is a well attested fact, that God has ever in view his own glory in all that he does or says. This motive is ever before him, and he always acts upon it. Now, is it possible to conceive *that falsehood* could ever, by any possibility, *promote* the glory of God? Could it ever, should God resort to it, advance his honor? This is simply impossible—it can not be. If, then, to be wanting in truth, and hence to abound in deceit, duplicity and lies, can never advance the glory of God, we can perceive that it will be for ever impossible for him to be other than true. He must

ever remain as he now is, and as he has ever been, the *Ever-living and True God*.

3. But still further, if a want of this attribute could never advance the honor and glory of God, *so neither could other than truth in God promote the happiness of his creatures*. Whatever God has purposed touching his creatures, is in accordance with his own glory; and all his purposes are consonant with his truth. Now, one of two things is certain; God has either made a mistake in his purposes touching man, or he has no need for other than truth in their fulfillment. In other words, if God's purposes, formed for the good of his creatures, are devised in wisdom, then has he no need to resort to deceit and falsehood in the fulfillment of them. A *wise plan* needs no subterfuges to promote it. It is only when *blunders are made*, or when persons have some *ulterior* end to subserve, that other than straight forward, true and honest courses are pursued. The purposes and plans of the Almighty, then, concerning his intelligent creatures being *just, and true, and good*, need nought but truth in their accomplishment.

4. And then again, for God to resort to other than veracity and faithfulness in advancing his own glory and the good of man, *implies that he is wanting in ability to carry out the purposes of his will in a way consonant with the great principles of right and truth*. But this, *reason says*, can not be the case with God. *Men* vary from the truth, prevaricate, and in their weakness, turn aside from the right, violate strict veracity, and are faith-

less to their pledges and promises, losing thus their own self-respect, the regard of their fellow-men, and the approbation of God, because *they are prevented by unforeseen events*, or by *unexpected obstacles*, from doing what they would. But God *never* meets with such obstacles. *No* events are to him unforeseen. All contingencies which could possibly occur, to the end of time; were present with him, when he devised all things in the counsels of eternity. He *can*, therefore, have no temptation ever to resort to any untruthful devices; to *any* false or deceptive measures, in the fulfillment of his glorious purposes. The end was known to him from the beginning. He is independent of all possible adverse combinations and contingencies, and pursues forever one undeviating, onward course, to the accomplishment of the high and holy ends he ever has in view. *Right reason*, then, the *enlightened judgment*, declares that it is impossible for God to be other than a *God of truth*.

II. But again. We argue the possession of this attribute by the Divine Being *from what we know of the other attributes of his nature*.

We have already seen, in previous chapters, that God is wise, holy, just, and good. Now, these four attributes, to mention no others, render the truth of God a necessity. Wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness, could never, even in man or angel, be made consonant with duplicity, falsehood, and faithlessness. Much less can this be the case with God. If he is wise, he must be truthful; for no greater *folly* is

found on earth than what is exhibited by the *false* and *faithless*. So, too, if he is *holy*, he must be *true*, for *falsehood* is *sin*, and infinite holiness and sinfulness can never exist in the same being. So neither can God be just nor good, and yet be faithless. The supposition can not for a moment be entertained, and we have no difficulty in perceiving that *truth*, in a being who is possessed of all *other* moral perfections, is a necessity. For God, then, who is wise, just, holy, and good, *not to be true*, is a moral impossibility. But,

III. We have still other means, no less conclusive, of demonstrating the existence of this attribute of Deity. For six thousand years, God has, in one way and another, been in communication with earth. In thousands of instances has he spoken to man, through his chosen agents, and by his providences, *and yet in all there has been a most signal exhibition of his unvarying veracity and faithfulness*. In all the hundreds of prophecies uttered since the world began, God has never been convicted of asserting what was not strictly true. Of all the promises of his Word to his children, to those who have loved and served him, there can be but one record. The united voice of all who have tested his faithfulness, is that he is indeed a God of truth.

We have, in preceding chapters, referred to the fulfillment of so many prophecies, in proof of the existence of other perfections of the Divine nature, that we need hardly do more, in this connection, than point to those remarks, and ask the reader to

consider their applicability to the point under discussion here. It may, however, be considered, in this connection, how, for two thousand years, God remembered his promise to Abraham, and how, during all the coldness, sinfulness, and defection of his descendants; during all the glaring manifestations of their faithlessness; God was true to his covenant engagements. He corrected them as a father for their rebellions; he sent them into captivity for their idolatry; and yet he did not cast them off, but continued still to treat them as his covenant people. An exhibition of God's dealings by the Israelitish nation, during their whole history, could it be contemplated in detail, would only be one long and unbroken chapter, unfolding God's veracity and faithfulness.

And then, as is well known, Christ was promised by God to our first parents in the garden of Eden. For long, long years, did the world await his coming. Again and again was it announced that he should come. Jacob foretold him, in the prediction, that "the scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." David sang of him; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Joel, and Malachi, gave forth the oft-repeated promise. Still he came not. Years rolled away; generations followed each other into the past; century after century, and age after age, came and went, and men began to say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But at length, in the fullness of time, and

when four thousand years had flown, the seed of the woman made his appearance ; the promise was fulfilled, and the veracity of God was vindicated. The world saw, as it is expressed by Peter, that " With the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ;" and that though man may think the promise about to fail, still God will stand justified in the result. All his promises are sure.

We have, also, an illustrious instance of God's faithfulness, in verifying that special promise which he has made to all who, in every age, believe in and accept of his Son. The blessedness of eternal life is promised to all who accept of Jesus of Nazareth, and rest upon him alone as the Saviour of their souls ; and never was there an instance, since Christianity was planted upon the earth, in which this promise was known to fail. Millions upon millions have tested it ; millions upon millions are this day living witnesses of God's faithfulness in verifying this gracious declaration of his lips. Ask a Christian if he has evidence that God is true, and his reply will be, " Yes, for he hath saved my soul ; he hath redeemed me according to his promise in Jesus Christ his Son." The child of God needs no better proof than this. God *promised* to redeem lost souls from hell. He placed upon record the gracious words, " Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." The Christian has *tested* the validity of this promise. He has cast himself upon God in Christ, and has found it not in vain. *There is a God who keepeth*

covenant and verifies all his assurances to the children of men. But,

IV. We might, did we deem it needful, appeal to the plain and repeated utterances of the Scriptures in proof of God's truth. Such passages as follows would be found in point: "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Ex. xxxiv. 6.) Here, as will be perceived, God himself, to his servant Moses, claims the possession of this attribute, as one of his distinguishing perfections. Then, again, we read that "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the Son of Man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19.) Then, too, we have that explicit testimony: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment, *a God of truth*, and without iniquity, just and right is he." (Deut. xxxii. 4.) Samuel, in his memorable interview with Saul, after the apostate king had forfeited the Divine favor, declared, "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent." (1 Sam. xv. 29.) The Psalmist declares, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are *true*, and righteous altogether." (Ps. xix. 9.) "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and *truth* shall go before thy face." (Ps. lxxxix. 14.) "For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting, *and his truth* endureth to all generations." (Ps. c.

5.) "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is *truth*." (Ps. cxix. 142.) Isaiah declares, in one of his fervid direct appeals to God, "Thy counsels of old are *faithfulness* and *truth*." (Isa. xxv. 1.) And John, in apocalyptic vision, saw heaven opened, and heard "those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name," singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, "saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; *just and true* are thy ways, thou King of Saints." (Rev. xv. 2, 3.)

But this must suffice for the direct testimony from Scripture. It is full and explicit. No perfection of the Divine nature is more frequently claimed as belonging to God than this attribute of truth. Our argument, then, covering the whole ground is this: Right reason demands that our God should be a God faithful and true. No motive can be conceived of which could induce God to swerve from the utmost veracity and faithfulness. The fact that he is infinitely wise, holy, just and good renders his truth a necessity. The experience of the world in the fulfillment of his promises and threatenings demonstrates the existence of this perfection, and the plain and explicit statements of his Word place the matter beyond *reasonable* dispute.

But all men are *not reasonable*, and hence some have raised objections to the views now presented; a few of which we notice: and,

1. It has been alleged by infidels that there are

statements in the Scriptures which, upon the supposition that the Bible is true, would convict God of falsehood; and the declaration to our first parents is cited: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and it is said this threat was not verified by the result. Because man did not *die physically*, therefore, it is alleged, this declaration is not true. Not to dwell upon the fact that this is the objection which the devil first raised, as it was this malignant spirit who first said, in opposition to God, "Thou shalt not surely die," we affirm that this declaration of the Almighty *was truly fulfilled*. Death, in its scriptural sense, is far from being a mere *cessation of the physical being*. Man may die in a hundred senses, while he still *retains his physical life*. He may die to goodness, to holiness, to charity, to pity, and to love. He may so change to-morrow from all that he is to-day, that we may justly say of him that he is dead to all his former self. Now this was strictly true of our first parents. By nature they were made in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. The moment they ate the forbidden fruit, that moment they *died* to all this: they *ceased to be* the beings they were before. Is not this death? But this is not all. *Before* the fall, our first parents were exempt from physical death. Had they remained sinless, their bodies would never have known disease or death. The moment, however, in which they sinned, that moment they lost their capacity for a *changeless physical existence*. They *died* that instant to the *immortal* life to which they were before the

heirs. Disease was sown in their systems, and physical death became inevitable.

But more than this even: *eternal* life, in peace and happiness with God, was the inheritance of our first parents while sinless. To this glorious boon they *died* the moment they sinned; from that moment they became subject to spiritual and eternal *death*. It is simply an exhibition, then, of a total ignorance of the real questions involved, to say that man did not *die* the very day he sinned. If the radical changes in his moral, physical, spiritual and eternal being which then took place were not *death*, we know not the meaning of the term. But,

2. *It is asked, "Are there not promises and threatenings in Scripture which have never been fulfilled? Did not God say to the Ninevites, by the mouth of his servant Jonah, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,' and yet was not Nineveh preserved, and did not Jonah himself manifest great disappointment that God did not verify his threatenings against the guilty city?"*

This objection is based upon a failure to recognize one of the clearest distinctions between the different utterances of God in his Word. Some of his promises and threatenings are *conditional*, and some *unconditional*. When God said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown," this sentence was evidently conditioned upon a *continuance* by the Ninevites in their sins. They, however, repented and turned to the Lord, and he spared them. Now this is true of many declarations of the Word. Thus

God says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" but it is yet in entire consistency with this declaration that *every* soul that repents of its sin *shall live*. It is no impeachment of the divine truth that God has placed upon record many promises and threatenings which are *conditional*. This is explained by God himself, through Jeremiah: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." The *change* here is not *in God*, but *in man*. The veracity of God, in all these *conditional* promises, is pledged to their fulfillment *only* upon the *contingency* that man's conduct shall render it finally expedient.

Many other objections of a similar nature have been raised, but they are all either *misapprehensions of the truth revealed*, or they are based upon *ignorance touching the plan of the Divine operations*. God *must be true*, let our *misconceptions* be what they may.

And now, in conclusion, consider,

1. How full of comfort is this view of the Divine character, to all who really desire to live *Christian lives*. As God is a God of truth, all such may rely implicitly upon his assistance. He has promised to aid them. He has declared that he will be *with* them always; that his strength shall be made perfect in their weakness, and that "*all things shall work together for their good*." How comforting all this!

Then, too, when death draws nigh, this great, and good, and faithful God, has promised to be near his children. They shall not be left in despair; the waves of Jordan shall not overflow them. *And then beyond and after death*, heaven is promised to them *by a God who can not lie*. In Christ Jesus, all the promises to Christians for time and eternity, become theirs, and this God of truth will verify them. What an unspeakably precious thought is this! But,

2. How terrible must it be to the impenitent, to remember that this God of truth has declared that he who believeth not in Jesus Christ *shall be damned*; that those who live and die out of Christ “shall go away into everlasting punishment.” If these words had been uttered by a mere man, or by an angel, they might not be true. But God is their author, and his verity can not be doubted. O impenitent reader! remember that it is a God of ABSOLUTE TRUTH, who has said, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.” Are you among the wicked? Do you forget God? O ponder those terrible words, and think who it is that utters them. It is

GOD,
WHO IS A SPIRIT,
INFINITE, ETERNAL, AND
UNCHANGEABLE IN HIS BEING,
KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, POWER, HOLINESS,
JUSTICE, GOODNESS, AND
TRUTH.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ Let waves and thunders mix and roar,
Be thou my Lord, and the whole world's mine;
While thou art SOVEREIGN, I'm secure;
I shall be rich till thou art poor;
For all I fear, and all I wish — heaven, earth and hell — are thine.”
WATTS.

“ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?”—MATT.
xx. 15.

HAVING finished the consideration of the Divine perfections in the last chapter, we turn, in this, to the discussion of a doctrine which has occasioned no little controversy in the religious world: namely,

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

One would think that all men must concede that a being *infinite* in his *knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth*; the *creator* of all things, and the *upholder* of all that he has created, is necessarily *sovereign*; that all things, animate and inanimate, must be subject to his will. And yet this proposition, reasonable though it appears, has by some been doubted, and by others flatly denied. In

discussing it, therefore, we have not entered upon a work of supererogation.

I. *Let us, then, at the beginning, inquire what is meant by the sovereignty of God.*

This doctrine, as taught in Scripture, and received by Christians, is, *that God, as the self-existent, eternal, unchangeable, and almighty Jehovah, orders, guides, controls and governs all the affairs of the universe, in accordance with the independent suggestions of his own righteous will.* This, however, is not done in the exercise of an *arbitrary* authority, as that word arbitrary is usually construed, for God, by reason of his holiness, justice, and goodness, *can will* only that which, on the whole, is right and good in itself, which promotes his own glory, and the highest and best interests of all his creatures.

It would seem that no reasonable person ought to complain of the exercise of *such* a sovereignty by *such* a Being. And now,

II. *What proof have we that God does exercise this sovereignty?*

1. *Let it be considered that a very strong presumption is raised in favor of this doctrine, by the fact that all men in every age, whether savage, civilized, or enlightened, have recognized the necessity of a sovereign power in the universe.* Almost all the heathen nations of the old world, with the aborigines of the new, have ascribed to their respective deities, *supreme authority.* Among some pagan nations of antiquity, we find, it is true, that certain philosophers contended for something which they called *destiny*, or *fate*,

which they supposed to exercise an authority superior even to the gods; a something to which even their *chief* deities were subject; but the vast majority have always ascribed *supreme* authority and power to the Deity himself, from whose will there could be no appeal.

Whatever objections therefore may be raised against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, as revealed in Scripture and received by Christians, they are seen to be entertained in the face of the remarkable fact that the judgments of men in all ages have *conceded* the *necessity* of such an authority, and have almost universally traced it to their supreme Deity. *All* men in every age—the learned and unlearned—have admitted the *existence* of the thing itself. A *presumption* is thus created in favor of the Bible teaching which refers this sovereignty to the only living and true God. Then,

2. *Proofs of this sovereignty are clearly seen in certain undeniable facts of existence.*

They are discovered in connection with the *birth* of every human being. Who determines the *circumstances* which attend man's entrance upon life? Who fixes the time or place of his birth? Whose will directs that one should be born in Europe, another in Asia, another in Africa, and another in America? Who determines that one should be born a prince, surrounded with all the pomp, the pride, the wealth, the luxury, of a regal palace, and that another should be ushered into life a beggar, with all the concomitants of discomfort, of poverty, and of want?

Who decrees that one should be born in heathen lands, with no example before him but the degrading and debasing superstitions of paganism, while another is ushered into life in the bosom of a Christian family, and with all the blessed surroundings of an enlightened Christian home? Are there not in all such cases the clear and undeniable indications of a sovereign power, directing, controlling, and governing; and is it not in entire accord with enlightened reason to hold that this power is lodged with him *who is the author of our being?*

So, too, in the time, place, and circumstances of our *death*, do we see the same truth clearly indicated. Who fixes these? Who orders *how*, and *when*, and *where*, men shall leave the world? Is it not undeniable that the circumstances attending our *exit* from life, as well as those which mark our *entrance* upon it, are wholly beyond *our* control, and that they furnish unmistakable proof of a power absolutely sovereign? And to whom does the exercise of this sovereignty belong, if not to God? Shall we refer it to *man*? Evidently not; for how few, in that case, would ever die. Shall it be referred to angels? Certainly not; for neither reason nor revelation teaches that issues so solemn are ever referred for settlement to angelic beings. With God alone rests the sovereignty here; with him who sees the end from the beginning, and with whom alone are the issues of life and death. But,

3. *In almost every hour of life, and in every*

department of duty, we meet with evidence of this sovereignty.

Deny as we may, that God exercises this power; call it "*destiny*," or "*fate*," or "*fortune*," or "*chance*," still the fact remains. There is an actual power, whose grasp is upon us, against which we find it impossible to contend, and before which nothing is left us but to bow in implicit obedience.

Is this questioned? Look at the agriculturalist. He prepares his fields with all the care and skill known to him. His best seed is sown in the best possible manner. He does all that man can do, and then awaits the issue. For a time it promises well; the appearances are favorable, and indicate a bountiful harvest. But lo! in a moment least expected, the blight comes down; the frost, the mildew, or the rust, smites the tender grain, and *barrenness* frowns where but yesterday *abundance* smiled. What now is to be done? Will the disappointed husbandman appeal? Will he protest? Will he demand redress? "Appeal," "protest," "redress" — these words have here no significancy. The man has met, face to face, with *absolute* power, and he feels it. He may seek to disguise his convictions by talking learnedly of secondary agencies, by saying that *this* or *that* was the cause of his calamity; by calling it *chance*, or *luck*, or *fate*; by alleging that it was due to some unfortunate concurrence of nature's laws; *but after all, there it is, a naked, palpable, unmasked* SOVEREIGNTY, which can not be ignored, and from which there is no appeal.

In like manner the merchant builds and equips a vessel for some distant port. He selects with the utmost care every stick of timber, every yard of canvas, every mast and spar, every bolt and bar. The officers and crew are the most reliable that can be secured; and with all these precautions he sends her forth upon her mission, saying, "I have done all that man can do to insure her safety." In a few weeks a letter reaches him, announcing that, overtaken by a terrific storm, his noble bark was driven upon the rocks, and now lies upon the bottom of the ocean, a total wreck. What can he do? Will it avail him to complain of the winds and the waves? Will it redeem his loss to protest against the destructive force of storms? Will it set his vessel afloat again to denounce the ocean's hidden rocks? No, no! All this is vain. The merchant has simply met a power superior to man's — a power, call it what he will, which he feels to be absolutely beyond his control — a power which, so far as man is concerned, is *unqualified* and *absolute*. The Bible calls it *sovereignty*, and in entire accordance with right reason, refers its exercise to God.

Or, look at such a case as this: Here, if you please, is an infidel. He is learned in all the arts and sciences. Dreading death as only an infidel can, he has made the science of medicine his special study. He has become familiar with diseases in all their forms. He has at hand, and ready for instant use, all the leading remedies known to the healing art. He has watched with constant care over the health

of his children, and thinks that he is able to grapple successfully with death, let it come in whatever guise it may.

At length he is aroused at the still midnight hour by an ominous cough—sharp, hard, spasmodic, which rings with a dreadful distinctness through his mansion. He springs from his couch and rushes to the nursery. In an instant his eye takes in the extent of his danger. It is his favorite child—that loving, lovely lad, just blooming into boyhood. How sharp the pang which shoots through the strong man's heart as he grasps the struggling sufferer in his arms! With what intense eagerness does he ply his skill! How anxiously he watches the effect of his remedies! How piteously does he appeal to others to aid him in his efforts to save his boy! How quickly he gathers other physicians as counselors, and in tones which would melt the heart of a stone, entreats them to save his darling! But alas! it is all in vain! His efforts—his entreaties—his appeals—his prayers—his tears are powerless. The inexorable decree has gone forth, and can not be recalled. As the faint light of the morning sun creeps in upon the scene, you behold that father bending in helpless agony over his lifeless clay, his whole frame convulsed with the intensity of his grief, and his soul shaken to its lowest depths with the agony of despair. In vain does he tear his hair and smite upon his breast, and call upon death to relieve him of his anguish. In vain does he protest against the terrible blow which has befallen him. His ravings are as idle as his

efforts to save his child were unavailing. He stands weak and helpless in the presence of a power, call it what you will, which is *supreme*. He has met with SOVEREIGNTY in one of its manifestations, and has been compelled to yield to its irresistible mandate.

And just such facts as these occur continually. Experience brings men into contact with *Sovereign power with irresistible might*, almost every day of their lives. How strange that in Christian lands this should be referred to any other source than to the ALMIGHTY GOD! But,

4. *We have the most emphatic teachings of the infallible Word, that this Sovereignty is in God.* Take such passages as these: "He is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." (Job xxiii. 13.) "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." (Job xxxiii. 13.) "Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased." (Ps. cxv. 3.) "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places." (Ps. cxxxv. 6.) "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. lv. 10.) "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth

according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.)

Lest, however, it should be said that these are the sentiments of an early and comparatively unenlightened age, let the reader consider the following emphatic utterances from the New Testament Scriptures: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; for the Scriptures saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." (Rom. ix. 15.) "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. i. 11.) "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.)

Are not these quotations full, clear, and explicit? Remembering that the Bible is given by inspiration, and that all its utterances are infallible, can we ask other evidence to prove God's *absolute Sovereignty*? Surely this would seem to be sufficient.

4. Since, now, reason, experience, and revelation, all conspire to teach that this sovereignty exists, *it*

is a most comforting thought that it is lodged with God.

A moment's reflection upon the character of Jehovah will convince any reasonable person that the world has nothing to fear from *his* exercise of absolute power. Unlimited and unrestricted authority is dangerous only,

1. When the person who possesses it is *ignorant* ; for then, though not designing it, he may, *through ignorance*, commit wrong and be guilty of oppression. Or,

2. When *malice* actuates the heart ; for then, one will be certain to do wrong, in response to his *vindictive* feelings. Or,

3. When *partiality* controls the actions ; for then, one will neglect the *deserving* to favor his *friends*, whether *worthy* or *unworthy*.

But it is evident that nothing of this character can be apprehended in the case before us. God is *infinite* in his *knowledge* and *wisdom* ; so that in his sovereign decisions touching any human interest, he can not err through ignorance. He is *infinite* in his *justice* and *equity*, and can, therefore, never be actuated by malice or revenge. He is also *infinite* in his *mercy* and his *love*, and can never be swerved from the strictest righteousness by any undue bias or partiality. Viewed, indeed, in whatever light, the *perfect* character of God gives assurance to all, that in the exercise of his sovereign power there can never be the slightest deviation from right. He rules *supreme*, but he rules in *righteousness*. He is

King of kings and Lord of lords ; but a King of infinite holiness, of absolute purity, and matchless love.

Since, then, *sovereignty* exists ; since it has a place some where in the universe ; since we *know ourselves* to be subject to such a power, should it not be to us a matter of supreme satisfaction to find that the infallible Word ascribes the sole exercise of this power to one

“TOO WISE TO ERR ; TOO GOOD TO BE UNKIND ?”

If Scripture referred this supreme authority and power to any *created* being, however glorious, we might have some reason for rebelling against the teaching. As it is, we have positively no ground of complaint ; and every intelligent creature should, with a glad outburst of holy joy, cry, with the Psalmist, “THE LORD REIGNETH ; LET THE EARTH REJOICE ; LET THE MULTITUDE OF THE ISLES BE GLAD THEREOF.”

5. And now, where lies the real difficulty in this matter ? Why is not God’s sovereignty at once and universally conceded ? Why are any found to question it ? If, as we have seen, this supreme authority exists some where ; and if the best and safest place for it is the bosom of a God infinitely holy, just, and good, why is not the world contented ?

Two classes of persons are found in rebellion against the Bible doctrine of God’s absolute sovereignty :

1. *The first class is composed of the unregenerate.*

With these, the difficulty is *radical*. It is found in the unrenewed carnal heart, which is "*enmity against God*," and which cherishes a *special* repugnance to the doctrine of Divine sovereignty. *Pride*, which is a leading characteristic of the human soul by nature, is arrayed in a relentless hostility against God's supreme authority. It would hurl him from the throne of universal dominion if it possessed the power. For this malignant disposition there is no cure save in a radical change of nature. The Holy Ghost must open the eyes of persons of this class, and effect within them the *new birth*. They must become *new creatures* in Christ; then, and then only, will they admit, that God "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou." But,

2. *Many professors of religion refuse to accept this doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty.* Their difficulty is to be traced chiefly to the mistaken idea, that Divine sovereignty *encroaches* upon *man's freedom*, *destroys* his *accountability*, and *reduces* him to the condition of a *mere machine*.

This objection, it is hardly needful to affirm, has its rise in ignorance. Did these persons read the Scriptures aright, they would learn that God can exercise an *absolute sovereignty* without *in the least infringing* upon man's proper freedom as a moral and accountable creature. *How* this can be, the Bible does not condescend to inform us; and if it did, it is doubtful if we could comprehend the matter

with our finite capacities ; but that this is the fact, that God can and does act, as the sovereign, without in the least intrenching upon man's responsibility, is one of the plainest teachings of the inspired volume.

Does the reader ask for proof ? Take the case of Joseph, sold by his evil-minded brothers into Egyptian bondage. Those brethren, in this transaction, were as free as it is possible for men to be. They recognized alone their own voluntary choice. They acted *freely*, and they acted *sinfully*, and yet Joseph could truly say, "God sent me before you to preserve a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.*" (Genesis xlv. 7, 8.) Here is certainly the free and voluntary agency of man, and at the same time the absolute sovereignty of God, and the one entirely *consistent* with the other, whether *we* can see it or not.

Another remarkable proof is found in the case of Balaam, that covetous prophet who was employed by Balak, king of the Moabites, to *curse* the children of Israel. This groveling man, though forbidden by the Almighty, was anxious to pour out anathemas upon the chosen people, *and yet in every attempt he made, blessings alone flowed from his lips.* So far as we can judge, from the record found in the 23rd chapter of Numbers, this was only a marked instance of God's sovereignty, exercised in producing *good* where man had intended *evil* ; and this result was secured in entire consistency with Balaam's moral freedom. The wicked prophet recognized no

physical restraint. He was led by a subtile and mysterious influence to do the will of God, while in his inmost soul desiring to comply with Balak's sinful wishes. This is but another instance of the ability of God to make "the wrath of man to praise him."

We have another signal exhibition of the exercise of this sovereignty in consistency with man's freedom in the life of Cyrus, the distinguished Medo-Persian prince, whom God called by his name nearly two hundred years before his birth, and who, though a heathen, was used, during his whole life, by the Almighty, to further his great designs of mercy toward his chosen people. Cyrus was a heathen and an idolater; knew nothing of the true God, and acted all his lifetime as though no such being existed. Still, his conduct was so overruled that he became the deliverer of Israel, in exact accordance with prophecies placed upon record hundreds of years before. *How was it that Cyrus did exactly what God wished should be done, while acting always according to the suggestions of his own unshackled will?* There is no answer to this question, except what is found in the statement that God can be sovereign, without in the least trampling upon man's proper freedom. Indeed, the fulfillment of *all* the prophecies of the sacred Word affords evidence overwhelming upon this point. Men always act *freely*; and yet they are so guided that they accomplish the will of him who "sees the end from the beginning."

The reader will not forget, in this connection, the

declaration of Peter touching the death of Christ :
“Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain.” (Acts ii. 23.) How manifest here those two things—*God’s sovereignty, and man’s freedom?* The words, “*him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,*” declare the participation of Jehovah in this event; and the words, “*ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain,*” show the free and unforced act of man in bringing Christ to the cross. Those Jews who crucified the Saviour were guilty. They laid “*wicked hands*” upon him, and yet he was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” However difficult it may be to comprehend, with our finite capacities, a mystery so profound, it is certainly clear that God’s sovereignty can be, and is, exercised in entire harmony with man’s freedom. To the same effect, might be quoted Paul’s advice to the Philip-
pian Christians: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Here, on the one hand, is God’s sovereignty; he works in the hearts of Christians, “both *to will* and *to do.*” On the other hand, man’s freedom and full responsibility are recognized in the command, “*Work out your own salvation.*” With just such teachings as these the Bible is filled. It reveals a God of sovereign power and authority, exercising absolute rule throughout the universe, and yet never failing

to enforce man's full responsibility. In the exercise of this sovereignty in such a way as to comport with man's free agency, God proves himself a being "*Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.*"

And now we are done. We have fulfilled the purpose with which we entered upon the preparation of these pages. We have contemplated God, in his existence, in his triune personality, in his glorious attributes, and in the exercise of his sovereign power. We have seen why we believe that the Scriptures, as we have them, are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We have studied the character of Christ, in all its beauty and perfection, and have pondered the person and work of the Holy Spirit, as the third person in the Trinity, the vicegerent of Deity in the accomplishment of the Divine purposes in providence and in grace. What themes are these! How elevating! how ennobling the thoughts to which the mind has now been directed! If the study of works of art, and the contemplation of the beautiful and sublime in nature, tend to refine and purify, how should the careful contemplation of these Divine themes draw our souls away from the low and groveling conceptions of earth which tend to debase and destroy, and fix them immovably upon the sanctifying and satisfying joys of heaven!

Reader, we part; but we shall meet again. In that day, "when the elements shall melt with fervent heat," "when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll," when Christ shall appear "to judge the world in righteousness," when the "great white

throne" shall be erected, when the sea shall give up its dead, and all men, small and great, be judged according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil, *then we shall meet*. What will be the character of that meeting? Will you, despite the counsels, the warnings, the injunctions, the teachings here presented, be found, in that dread hour, *unsaved*? Will you, in that day, be placed on the left hand of the Judge, in that vast throng of hypocrites and unbelievers, to hear your doom in those awful words, "*Depart from me ye cursed, into EVERLASTING fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?*" God forbid. This need not be. Jesus waits to be gracious. In tones of sweetest love, he cries, "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" Believe, only BELIEVE, and you shall live. Take to your heart that gracious declaration which stands like a sun of hope and joy upon the eternal page, throwing its beams across the ages: "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have EVERLASTING LIFE.*"

Reader, farewell.

MAY "THE GOD OF PEACE, THAT BROUGHT AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL, WORKING IN YOU THAT WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER,

AMEN."

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